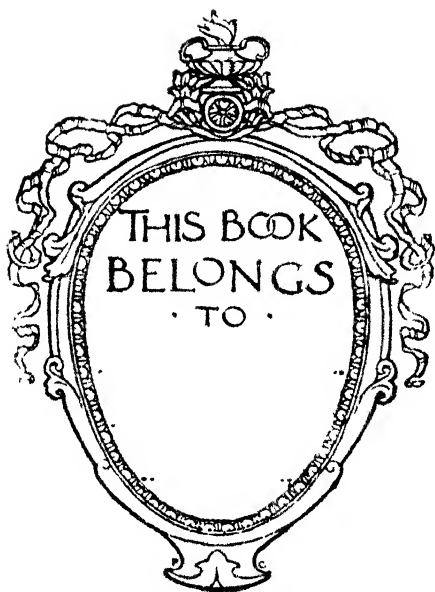
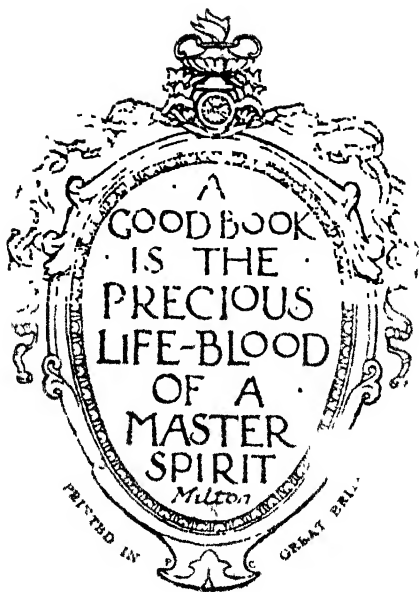


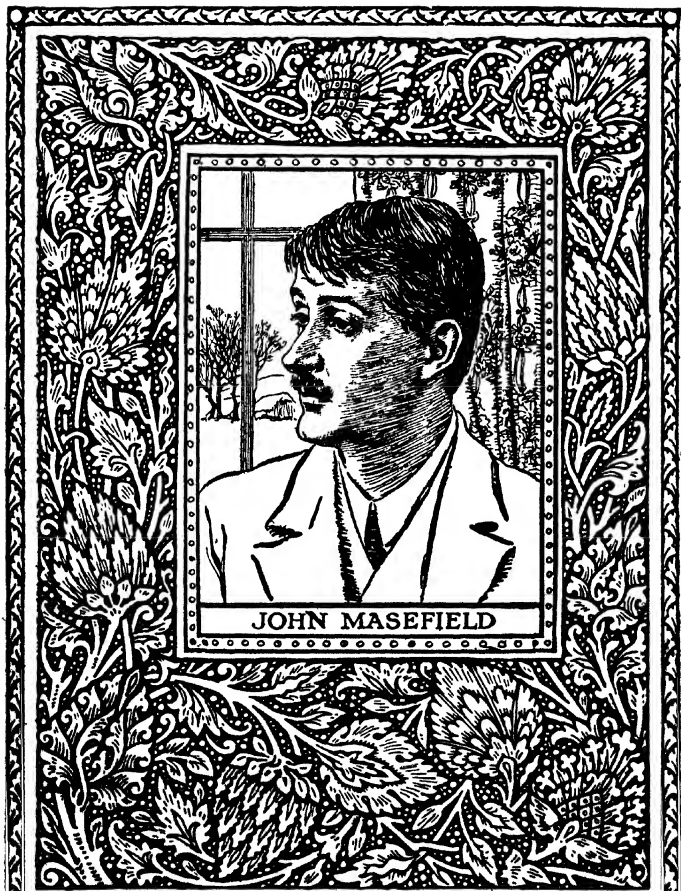
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THIS book is "junior" to the *Modern Prose* of the series edited by Mr. Guy N. Pocock, not so much because its language is simpler, but because the ideas dealt with are more concrete, and the subjects more realistic and less introspective. In most cases I have tried to introduce the reader to a book worth reading and not beyond his powers of comprehension, and several extracts are first chapters or taken from the first portions of books which simply must be finished, such as R. L. Stevenson's *St. Ives*, John Buchan's *Prester John*, John Masefield's *Lost Endeavour*, Quiller-Couch's *Dead Man's Rock*, and others of a similar stirring and satisfying kind. Each passage is lengthy enough to satisfy immediate curiosity, and a few selections are quite complete in themselves.

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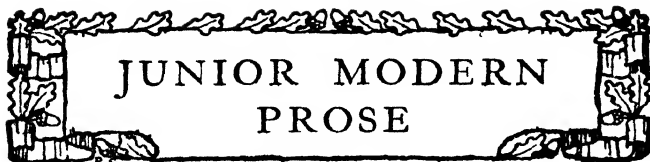
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MRS. MURPHY, of Edmonton, Canada ("Janey Canuck") for a chapter from *Open Trails*.

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# JUNIOR MODERN PROSE

## HRYMIR, THE FROST-GIANT

BEING A SECTION FROM "GLAUCUS; OR, THE  
WONDERS OF THE SHORE"

BY

CHARLES KINGSLEY

YOU are sitting, perhaps, in your coracle, upon some mountain tarn, waiting for a wind, and waiting in vain. . . . .

You paddle to the shore on the side whence the wind ought to come, if it had any spirit in it; tie the coracle to a stone, light your cigar, lie down on your back upon the grass, grumble, and finally fall asleep. In the meanwhile, probably, the breeze has come on, and there has been half an hour's lively fishing curl; and you wake just in time to see the last ripple of it sneaking off at the other side of the lake, leaving all as dead-calm as before.

Now how much better, instead of falling asleep, to have walked quietly round the lake side, and asked of your own brains and of nature the question, "How did this lake come here? What does it mean?"

It is a hole in the earth. True, but how was the hole made? There must have been huge forces at

work to form such a chasm. Probably the mountain was actually opened from within by an earthquake, and when the strata fell together again, the portion at either end of the chasm, being perhaps crushed together with greater force, remained higher than the centre, and so the water lodged between them. Perhaps it was formed thus. You will at least agree that its formation must have been a grand sight enough, and one during which a spectator would have had some difficulty in keeping his footing.

And when you learn that this convulsion probably took place at the bottom of an ocean, hundreds of thousands of years ago, you have at least a few thoughts over which to ruminate, which will make you at once too busy to grumble, and ashamed to grumble.

Yet after all, I hardly think the lake was formed in this way, and suspect that it may have been dry land for ages after it emerged from the primeval waves, and Snowdonia was a palm-fringed island in a tropic sea. Let us look the place over more carefully.

You see the lake is nearly circular; on the side where we stand, the pebbly beach is not six feet above the water, and slopes away steeply into the valley behind us, while before us it shelves gradually into the lake; forty yards out, as you know, there is not ten feet water; and then a steep bank, the edge whereof we and the big trout know well, sinks suddenly to unknown depths. On the opposite side, that vast flat-topped wall of rock towers up shoreless into the sky, seven hundred feet perpendicular; the deepest water of all, we know, is at its very foot.



Right and left, two shoulders of down slope into the lake. Now turn round and look down the gorge. Remark that this pebble bank on which we stand reaches some fifty yards downward: you see the loose stones peeping out everywhere. We may fairly suppose that we stand on a dam of loose stones, a hundred feet deep.

But why loose stones?—and if so, what matter, and what wonder? There are rocks cropping out everywhere down the hill-side.

Because if you will take up one of these stones and crack it across, you will see that it is not of the same stuff as those said rocks. Step into the next field and see. That rock is the common Snowdon slate, which we see everywhere. The two shoulders of down, right and left, are slate too; you can see that at a glance. But the stones of the pebble bank are a close-grained, yellow-spotted rock. They are Syenite; and (you may believe me or not, as you will) they were once upon a time in the condition of hasty-pudding heated to some 800 degrees of Fahrenheit, and in that condition shoved their way up somewhere or other through these slates. But where? whence on earth did these Syenite pebbles come? Let us walk round to the cliff on the opposite side, and see. It is worth while; for even if my guess be wrong, there is good spinning with a brass minnow round the angles of the rocks.

Now see. Between the cliff-foot and the sloping down is a crack, ending in a gully; the nearer side is of slate, and the further side, the cliff itself, is—why, the whole cliff is composed of the very same stone as the pebble ridge!

Now, my good friend, how did those pebbles get three hundred yards across the lake? Hundreds of tons, some of them three feet long; who carried them across? The old Cymry were not likely to amuse themselves by making such a breakwater up here in No-man's-land, two thousand feet above the sea: but somebody, or something, must have carried them; for stones do not fly, nor swim either.

Shot out of a volcano? As you seem determined to have a prodigy, it may as well be a sufficiently huge one.

Well—these stones lie all together; and a volcano would have hardly made so compact a shot, not being in the habit of using Eløy's wire cartridges. Our next hope of a solution lies in John Jones, who carried up the coracle. Hail him, and ask him what is on the top of that cliff . . . So? "Plainshe and pogshe, and another Llyn." Very good. Now, does it not strike you that this whole cliff has a remarkably smooth and plastered look, like a hare's run up an earth-bank? And do you see that it is polished thus only over the lake? that as soon as the cliff abuts on the downs right and left, it forms pinnacles, caves, broken angular boulders? Syenite usually does so in our damp climate, from the "weathering" effect of frost and rain: why has it not done so over the lake? On that part something (giants perhaps) has been scrambling up or down on a very large scale, and so rubbed off every corner which was inclined to come away, till the solid core of the rock was bared. And may not those mysterious giants have had a hand in carrying the stones across the lake? . . . Really I am not altogether

jesting. Think awhile what agent could possibly have produced either one, or both, of those effects?

There is but one; and that, if you have been an Alpine traveller, much more if you have been a chamois hunter, you have seen many a time (whether you knew it or not) at the very same work

Ice? Yes, ice, Hrymir the frost-giant, and no one else. And if you will look at the facts, you will see how ice may have done it. Our friend John Jones's report of plains and bogs and a lake above makes it quite possible that in the "Ice age" (Glacial Epoch, as the big-word-mongers call it) there was above that cliff a great *névé*, or snowfield, such as you have seen often in the Alps at the head of each glacier. Over the face of this cliff a glacier has crawled down from that *névé*, polishing the face of the rock in its descent: but the snow, having no large and deep outlet, has not slid down in a sufficient stream to reach the vale below, and form a glacier of the first order; and has therefore stopped short on the other side of the lake, as a glacier of the second order, which ends in an ice cliff hanging high upon the mountain-side, and kept from further progress by daily melting. If you have ever gone up the Mer de Glace to the Tacul, you saw a magnificent specimen of this sort on your right hand, just opposite the Tacul, in the Glacier de Trelaporte, which comes down from the Aiguille de Charmoz.

This explains our pebble-ridge. The stones which the glacier rubbed off the cliff beneath it it carried forward, slowly but surely, till they saw the light again in the face of the ice cliff, and dropped out of it under the melting of the summer sun, to form

a huge dam across the ravine, till, the "Ice age" past, a more genial climate succeeded, and névé and glacier melted away: but the "moraine" of stones did not, and remains, to this day, the dam which keeps up the waters of the lake.

There is my explanation. If you can find a better, do: but remember always that it must include an answer to "How did the stones get across the lake?"

Now, reader, we have had no abstruse science here, no long words, not even a microscope or a book: and yet we, as two plain sportsmen, have gone back, or been led back by fact and common sense, into the most awful and sublime depths, into an epos of the destruction and re-creation of a former world.

## PHRIXOS AND HELLÊ

FROM "TALES OF ANCIENT GREECE"

BY

SIR G. W. COX

MANY, many years ago, there was a man called Athamas, and he had a wife whose name was Nephelê. They had two children—a boy and a girl. The name of the boy was Phrixos, and his sister was called Hellê. They were good and happy children, and played about merrily in the fields, and their mother Nephelê loved them dearly. But by and by their mother was taken away from them;

and their father Athamas forgot all about her, for he had not loved her as he ought to do. And very soon he married another wife whose name was Ino; but she was harsh and unkind to Phrixos and Hellê, and they began to be very unhappy. Their cheeks were no more rosy, and their faces no longer looked bright and cheerful, as they used to do when they could go home to their mother Nephelê; and so they played less and less, until none would have thought that they were the same children who were so happy before Nephelê was taken away. But Ino hated these poor children, for she was a cruel woman, and she longed to get rid of Phrixos and Hellê, and she thought how she might do so. So she said that Phrixos spoilt all the corn, and prevented it from growing, and that they would not be able to make any bread till he was killed. At last she persuaded Athamas that he ought to kill Phrixos. But although Athamas cared nothing about Phrixos and Hellê, still their mother Nephelê saw what was going on, although they could not see her, because there was a cloud between them; and Nephelê was determined that Athamas should not hurt Phrixos. So she sent a ram, which had a golden fleece, to carry her children away; and one day, when they were sitting down on the grass (for they were too sad and unhappy to play), they saw a beautiful ram come into the field. And Phrixos said to Hellê, "Sister, look at this sheep that is coming to us; see, he shines all over like gold—his horns are made of gold, and all the hair on his body is golden too." So the ram came nearer and nearer, and at last he lay down quite close to them, and looked so quiet that Phrixos and Hellê

were not at all afraid of him. Then they played with the sheep, and they took him by the horns, and stroked his golden fleece, and patted him on the head; and the ram looked so pleased that they thought they would like to have a ride on his back. So Phrixos got up first, and put his arms round the ram's neck, and little Hellê got up behind her brother and put her arms round his waist, and then they called to the ram to stand up and carry them about. And the ram knew what they wanted, and began to walk first, and then to run. By and by it rose up from the ground and began to fly. And when it first left the earth, Phrixos and Hellê became frightened, and they begged the ram to go down again and put them upon the ground; but the ram turned his head round, and looked so gently at them, that they were not afraid any more. So Phrixos told Hellê to hold on tight round his waist; and he said, "Dear Hellê, do not be afraid, for I do not think the ram means to do us any harm, and I almost fancy that he must have been sent by our dear mother Nephelê, and that he will carry us to some better country, where the people will be kind to us as our mother used to be."

Now it so happened that, just as the ram began to fly away with the two children on its back, Ino and Athamas came into the field, thinking how they might kill Phrixos, but they could not see him anywhere; and when they looked up, there, high up in the air over their heads, they saw the ram flying away with the children on its back. So they cried out and made a great noise, and threw stones up into the air, thinking that the ram would get frightened and come down to the earth again; but the ram

did not care how much noise they made or how many stones they threw up. On and on he flew, higher and higher, till at last he looked only like a little yellow speck in the blue sky, and then Ino and Athamas saw him no more.

So these wicked people sat down, very angry and unhappy. They were sorry because Phrixos and Hellé had got away all safe, when they wanted to kill them. But they were much more sorry because they had gone away on the back of a ram whose fleece was made of gold. So Ino said to Athamas, "What a pity that we did not come into the field a little sooner, for then we might have caught this ram and killed him and stripped off his golden fleece, and we should have been rich for the rest of our days."

All this time the ram was flying on and on, higher and higher, with Phrixos and Hellé on its back. And Hellé began to be very tired, and she said to her brother that she could not hold on much longer; and Phrixos said, "Dear Hellé, try and hold on as long as you possibly can: I dare say the ram will soon reach the place to which he wants to carry us, and then you shall lie down on the soft grass, and have such pleasant sleep that you will not feel tired any more." But Hellé said, "Dearest Phrixos, I will indeed try and hold fast as long as I can; but my arms are becoming so weak that I am afraid that I shall not be able to hold on long." And by and by, when she grew weaker, she said, "Dear Phrixos, if I fall off, you will not see Hellé any more; but you must not forget her, you must always love her as much as she loved you; and then some day or

other we shall see each other again, and live with our dear mother Nephelê." Then Phrixos said, "Try and hold fast a little longer still, Hellê. I can never love any one so much as I love you: but I want you to live with me on the earth, and I cannot bear to think of living without you."

But it was of no use that he talked so kindly and tried to encourage his sister, because he was not able to make her arms and her body stronger: so by and by poor Hellê fell off, just as they were flying over a narrow part of the sea; and she fell into it, and was drowned. And the people called the part of the sea where she fell in the Hellespont, which means the sea of little Hellê.

So Phrixos was left alone on the ram's back; and the ram flew on and on a long way, till it came to the palace of Aiêtes, the King of Kolchis. And King Aiêtes was walking about in his garden, when he looked up into the sky, and saw something which looked very like a yellow sheep with a little boy on its back. And King Aiêtes was greatly amazed, for he had never seen so strange a thing before; and he called his wife and his children, and every one else that was in his house, to come and see this wonderful sight. And they looked, and saw the ram coming nearer and nearer, and then they knew that it really was a boy on its back; and by and by the ram came down upon the earth near their feet, and Phrixos got off its back. Then King Aiêtes went up to him, and took him by the hand, and asked who he was; and he said, "Tell me, little boy, how it is that you come here, riding in this strange way, on the back of a ram." Then Phrixos told him how the ram had



come into the field where he and Hellê were playing, and had carried them away from Ino and Athamas, who were very unkind to them, and how little Hellê had grown tired, and fallen off his back, and had been drowned in the sea. Then King Aiêtes took Phrixos up in his arms, and said, "Do not be afraid, I will take care of you and give you all that you want, and no one shall hurt you here; and the ram which has carried you through the air shall stay in this beautiful place, where he will have as much grass to eat as he can possibly want, and a stream to drink out of and to bathe in whenever he likes."

So Phrixos was taken into the palace of King Aiêtes, and everybody loved him, because he was good and kind, and never hurt any one. And he grew up healthy and strong, and he learnt to ride about the country and to leap and run over the hills and valleys, and swim about in the clear rivers. He had not forgotten his sister Hellê, for he loved her still as much as ever, and very often he wished that she could come and live with him again; but he knew that she was now with his mother Nephelê, in the happy land in which good people go after they are dead. And therefore he was never unhappy when he thought of his sister, for he said, "One day I too shall be taken to that bright land, and live with my mother and my sister again, if I try always to do what is right." And very often he used to go and see the beautiful ram with the golden fleece feeding in the garden, and stroke its golden locks.

But the ram was not so strong now as he was when he flew through the air with Phrixos and Hellê on his back, for he was growing old and weak; and

at last the ram died, and Phrixos was very sorry. And King Aiêtes had the golden fleece taken off from his body, and they nailed it up upon the wall; and every one came to look at the fleece which was made of gold, and to hear the story of Phrixos and Hellê.

But all this while Athamas and Ino had been hunting about everywhere, to see if they could find out where the ram had gone with the children on his back, and they asked every one whom they met if they had seen a sheep with a fleece of gold carrying away two children. But no one could tell them anything about it, till at last they came to the house of Aiêtes, the King of Kolchis. And they came to the door, and asked Aiêtes if he had seen Phrixos and Hellê, and the sheep with the golden fleece. Then Aiêtes said to them, "I have never seen little Hellê, for she fell off from the ram's back, and was drowned in the sea; but Phrixos is with me still; and as for the ram, see here is his golden fleece nailed up upon the wall." And just then Phrixos happened to come in, and Aiêtes asked them, "Look now, and tell me if this is the Phrixos whom you are seeking." And when they saw him they said, "It is indeed the same Phrixos who went away on the ram's back; but he is grown into a great man"; and they began to be afraid, because they thought they could not now ill-treat Phrixos, as they used to do when he was a little boy. So they tried to entice him away by pretending to be glad to see him; and they said, "Come away with us, and we shall live happily together." But Phrixos saw from the look of their faces that they were not telling the truth, and that

they hated him still; and he said to them, "I will not go with you; King Aiêtes has been very good to me, and you were always unkind to me and to my sister, and therefore I will never leave King Aiêtes to go away with you." Then they said to Aiêtes, "Phrixos may stay here, but give us the golden fleece which came from the ram that carried away the children." But the king said, "I will not, I know that you only ask for it because you wish to sell it, and therefore you shall not have it."

Then Ino and Athamas turned away in a rage, and went to their own country again, wretched and unhappy because they could not get the golden fleece. And they told every one that the fleece of the ram was in the palace of the King of Kolchis, and they tried to persuade every one to go in a great ship and take away the fleece by force. So a great many people came, and they all got into a large ship called the *Argo*, and they sailed and sailed, until at last they came to Kolchis. Then they sent some one to ask Aiêtes to give them the golden fleece; but he would not, and they would never have found the fleece again, if the wise maiden Medeia had not shown Iason how he might do the bidding of King Aiêtes. But when Iason had won the prize and they had sailed back again to their own land, the fleece was not given to Athamas and Ino. The other people took it, for they said, "It is quite right that we should have it, to make up for all our trouble in helping to get it." So, with all their greediness, these wretched people remained as poor and as miserable as ever.

## THE CUP OF WATER

FROM "A BOOK OF GOLDEN DEEDS"

BY

CHARLOTTE M. YONGE

No touch in the history of the minstrel-king David gives us a more warm and personal feeling towards him than his longing for the water at the well of Bethlehem. Standing as the incident does in the summary of the characters of his mighty men, it is apt to appear to us as if it had taken place in his latter days; but such is not the case—it befell while he was still under thirty, in the time of his persecution by Saul.

It was when the last attempt at reconciliation with the king had been made, when the affectionate parting with the generous and faithful Jonathan had taken place, when Saul was hunting him like a partridge on the mountains on the one side, and the Philistines had nearly taken his life on the other, that David, outlawed, yet loyal at the heart, sent his aged parents to the land of Moab for refuge, and himself took up his abode in the caves of the wild limestone hills that had become familiar to him when he was a shepherd. Brave captain and Heaven-destined king as he was, his name attracted round him a motley group of those that were in distress, or in debt, or discontented; and among them were the "mighty men" whose brave deeds won them the foremost posts in that army with which David was

to fulfil the ancient promises to his people. There were his three nephews, Joab, the ferocious and imperious, the chivalrous Abishai, and Asahel the fleet of foot; there was the warlike Levite Benaiah, who slew lions and lionlike men, and others who, like David himself, had done battle with the gigantic sons of Anak. Yet even these valiant men, so wild and lawless, could be kept in check by the voice of their young captain, and, outlaws as they were, they spoiled no peaceful villages, they lifted not their hands against the persecuting monarch, and the neighbouring farms lost not one lamb through their violence. Some at least listened to the song of their warlike minstrel:

Come, ye children, and hearken to me: I will teach you the  
fear of the Lord.

What man is he that lusteth to live, and would fain see good  
days?

Let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they  
speak no guile.

Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and  
ensue it

With such strains as these, sung to his harp, the warrior gained the hearts of his men to enthusiastic love, and gathered followers on all sides, among them eleven fierce men of Gad, with faces like lions and feet swift as roes, who swam the Jordan in time of flood, and fought their way to him, putting all enemies in the valleys to flight.

But the Eastern sun burnt on the bare rocks. A huge fissure, opening in the mountain ridge, encumbered at the bottom with broken rocks, with precipitous banks, scarcely affording a footing for

the wild goats—such is the spot where, upon the cleft on the steep precipice, still remain the foundations of the “hold,” or tower, believed to have been David’s retreat; and near at hand is the low-browed entrance of the galleried cave, alternating between narrow passages and spacious halls, but all oppressively hot and close. Waste and wild, without bush or a tree, in the feverish atmosphere of Palestine it was a desolate region; and at length the wanderer’s heart fainted in him, as he thought of his own home with its rich and lovely terraced slopes, green with wheat, trellised with vines, and clouded with grey olive, and of the cool cisterns of living water by the gate of which he loved to sing:

He shall feed me in a green pasture,  
And lead me forth beside the waters of comfort.

His parched, longing lips gave utterance to the sigh “Oh that one would give me to drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem that is beside the gate!”

Three of his brave men, apparently Abishai Benaiah, and Eleazar, heard the wish. Between their mountain fastness and the dearly-loved spring lay the host of the Philistines; but their love for their leader feared no enemies. It was not only water that he longed for, but the water from the fountain which he had loved in his childhood. They descended from their chasm, broke through the midst of the enemy’s army, and drew the water from the favourite spring, bearing it back, once again through the foe, to the tower upon the rock! Deeply moved was their chief at this act of self-devotion—so much moved that the water seemed to him too sacred to

put to his own use. "May God forbid it me that I should do this thing. Shall I drink the blood of these men that have put their lives in jeopardy, for with the jeopardy of their lives they brought it?" And as a hallowed and precious gift, he poured out unto the Lord the water obtained at the price of such peril to his followers.

In later times we meet with another hero, who by his personal qualities inspired something of the same enthusiastic attachment as did David, and who met with an adventure somewhat similar, showing the like nobleness of mind on the part of both leader and followers.

It was Alexander of Macedon, whose character as a man, with all its dark shades of violence, rage, and profanity, has a nobleness and sweetness that win our hearts, while his greatness rests on a far broader basis than that of his conquests, though they are unrivalled. No one else so gained the love of the conquered, had such wide and comprehensive views for the amelioration of the world, or rose so superior to the prejudice of race; nor have any ten years left so lasting a trace upon the history of the world as those of his career.

It is not, however, of his victories that we are here to speak, but of his return march from the banks of the Indus, in 326 B.C., when he had newly recovered from the severe wound which he had received under the fig-tree, within the mud wall of the city of Malli. This expedition was as much the exploration of a discoverer as the journey of a conqueror; and, at the mouth of the Indus, he sent his ships to survey the coasts of the Indian Ocean and

Persian Gulf, while he himself marched along the shore of the province then called Gedrosia, and now Mekhran. It was a most dismal tract. Above towered mountains of reddish-brown bare stone, treeless and without verdure, the scanty grass produced in the summer being burnt up long before September, the month of his march; and all the slope below was equally desolate tracts of gravel. The few inhabitants were called by the Greeks fish-eaters and turtle-eaters, because there was, apparently, nothing else to eat, and their huts were built of turtle-shells.

The recollections connected with the region were dismal. Semiramis and Cyrus were each said to have lost an army there through hunger and thirst; and these foes, the most fatal foes of the invader, began to attack the Greek host. Nothing but the discipline and all-pervading influence of Alexander could have borne his army through. Speed was their sole chance; and through the burning sun, over the arid rock, he stimulated their steps with his own high spirit of unshrinkable endurance, till he had dragged them through one of the most rapid and extraordinary marches of his wonderful career. His own share in their privations was fully and freely taken; and once when, like the rest, he was faint with heat and deadly thirst, a small quantity of water, won with great fatigue and difficulty, was brought to him, he esteemed it too precious to be applied to his own refreshment, but poured it forth as a libation, lest, he said, his warriors should thirst the more when they saw him drink alone; and, no doubt, too, because he felt the exceeding value of that which was purchased by loyal love.



A like story is told of Rodolf of Hapsburg, the founder of the greatness of Austria, and one of the most open-hearted of men. A flagon of water was brought to him when his army was suffering from severe drought. "I cannot," he said, "drink alone, nor can all share so small a quantity. I do not thirst for myself, but for my whole army."

Yet there have been thirsty lips that have made a still more trying renunciation. Our own Sir Philip Sidney, riding back, with the mortal hurt in his broken thigh, from the fight at Zutphen, and giving the draught from his own lips to the dying man whose necessities were greater than his own, has long been our proverb for the giver of that self-denying cup of water that shall by no means lose its reward.

A tradition of an act of somewhat the same character survived in a Slesvig family, now extinct. It was during the wars that raged from 1652 to 1660, between Frederick the Third of Denmark and Charles Gustavus of Sweden, that, after a battle, in which the victory had remained with the Danes, a stout burgher of Flensburg was about to refresh himself, ere retiring to have his wounds 'dressed, with a draught of beer from a wooden bottle, when an imploring cry from a wounded Swede, lying on the field, made him turn, and, with the very words of Sidney, "Thy need is greater than mine," he knelt down by the fallen enemy, to pour the liquor into his mouth. His requital was a pistol-shot in the shoulder from the treacherous Swede. "Rascal," he cried, "I would have befriended you, and you would murder me in return! Now will I punish you. I would have given you the whole bottle, but now

you shall have only half." And drinking off half himself, he gave the rest to the Swede. The king, hearing the story, sent for the burgher, and asked how he came to spare the life of such a rascal.

"Sire," said the honest burgher, "I could never kill a wounded enemy."

"Thou meritest to be a noble," the king said, and created him one immediately, giving him as armorial bearings a wooden bottle pierced with an arrow!

## THE TWO BOYHOODS

BEING A SELECTION FROM "MODERN PAINTERS"

BY

JOHN RUSKIN

BORN half-way between the mountains and the sea—that young George of Castelfranco—of the Brave Castle: Stout George they called him, George of Georges, so goodly a boy he was—Giorgione.

Have you ever thought what a world his eyes opened on—fair, searching eyes of youth? What a world of mighty life, from those mountain roots to the shore—of loveliest life, when he went down, yet so young, to the marble city—and became himself as a fiery heart to it?

A city of marble, did I say? Nay, rather a golden city, paved with emerald. For truly, every pinnacle and turret glanced or glowed, overlaid with gold, or

bossed with jasper. Beneath, the unsullied sea drew in deep breathing, to and fro, its eddies of green wave. Deep-hearted, majestic, terrible as the sea,—the men of Venice moved in sway of power and war; pure as her pillars of alabaster, stood her mothers and maidens; from foot to brow, all noble, walked her knights; the low bronzed gleaming of sea-rusted armour shot angrily under their blood-red mantle-folds. Fearless, faithful, patient, impenetrable, implacable—every word a fate—sate her senate. In hope and honour, lulled by flowing of wave around their isles of sacred sand, each with his name written and the cross graved at his side, lay her dead. A wonderful piece of world. Rather, itself a world. It lay along the face of the waters, no larger, as its captains saw it from their masts at evening, than a bar of sunset that could not pass away; but for its power, it must have seemed to them as if they were sailing in the expanse of heaven, and this a great planet, whose orient edge widened through ether. A world from which all ignoble care and petty thoughts were banished, with all the common and poor elements of life. No foulness, nor tumult, in those tremulous streets, that filled, or fell, beneath the moon; but rippled music of majestic change, or thrilling silence. No weak walls could rise above them; no low-roofed cottage, nor straw-built shed. Only the strength as of rock, and the finished setting of stones most precious. And around them, far as the eye could reach, still the soft moving of stainless waters, proudly pure; as not the flower, so neither the thorn nor the thistle, could grow in the glancing fields. Ethereal strength of Alps, dream-like, vanishing

of the place he was born in. No matter how ugly it is—has it anything about it like Maiden Lane, or like Thames' shore? If so, it shall be painted for their sake. Hence, to the very close of life, Turner could endure uglinesses which no one else, of the same sensibility, would have borne with for an instant. Dead brick walls, blank square windows, old clothes, market-womanly types of humanity—anything fishy and muddy, like Billingsgate or Hungerford Market, had great attraction for him; black barges, patched sails, and every possible condition of fog.

You will find these tolerations and affections guiding or sustaining him to the last hour of his life; the notablest of all such endurances being that of dirt. No Venetian ever draws anything foul; but Turner devoted picture after picture to the illustration of effects of dinginess, smoke, soot, dust, and dusty texture; old sides of boats, weedy roadside vegetation, dung - hills, straw - yards, and all the soilings and stains of every common labour.

And more than this, he not only could endure, but enjoyed and looked for *litter*, like Covent Garden wreck after the market. His pictures are often full of it, from side to side; their foregrounds differ from all others in the natural way that things have of lying about in them. Even his richest vegetation, in ideal work, is confused; and he delights in shingle, débris, and heaps of fallen stones. The last words he ever spoke to me about a picture were in gentle exultation about his St. Gothard: "that *litter* of stones which I endeavoured to represent."

The second great result of this Covent Garden

training was understanding of and regard for the poor, whom the Venetians, we saw, despised; whom, contrarily, Turner loved, and more than loved—understood. He got no romantic sight of them, but an infallible one, as he prowled about the end of his lane, watching night effects in the wintry streets; nor sight of the poor alone, but of the poor in direct relations with the rich. He knew, in good and evil, what both classes thought of, and how they dealt with, each other.

Reynolds and Gainsborough, bred in country villages, learned there the country boy's reverential theory of "the squire," and kept it. They painted the squire and the squire's lady as centres of the movements of the universe, to the end of their lives. But Turner perceived the younger squire in other aspects about his lane, occurring prominently in its night scenery, as a dark figure, or one of two, against the moonlight. He saw also the working of city commerce, from endless warehouse, towering over Thames, to the back shop in the lane, with its stale herrings—highly interesting these last; one of his father's best friends, whom he often afterwards visited affectionately at Bristol, being a fishmonger and glue-boiler; which gives us a friendly turn of mind towards herring-fishing, whaling, Calais *poissardes*, and many other of our choicest subjects in after life; all this being connected with that mysterious forest below London Bridge on one side; and, on the other, with these masses of human power and national wealth which weigh upon us, at Covent Garden here, with strange compression, and crush us into narrow Hand Court.

"That mysterious forest below London Bridge"—better for the boy than wood of pine, or grove of myrtle. How he must have tormented the watermen, beseeching them to let him crouch anywhere in the bows, quiet as a log, so only that he might get floated down there among the ships, and round and round the ships, and with the ships, and by the ships, and under the ships, staring, and clambering—these the only quite beautiful things he can see in all the world, except the sky; but these, when the sun is on their sails, filling or falling, endlessly disordered by sway of tide and stress of anchorage, beautiful unspeakably; which ships also are inhabited by glorious creatures—red-faced sailors, with pipes, appearing over the gunwales, true knights, over their castle parapets—the most angelic beings in the whole compass of London world. And Trafalgar happening long before we can draw ships, we, nevertheless, coax all current stories out of the wounded sailors, do our best at present to show Nelson's funeral streaming up the Thames; and vow that Trafalgar shall have its tribute of memory some day. Which, accordingly, is accomplished—once, with all our might, for its death; twice, with all our might, for its victory; thrice, in pensive farewell to the old *Téméraire*, and, with it, to that order of things.

Now this fond companying with sailors must have divided his time, it appears to me, pretty equally between Covent Garden and Wapping (allowing for incidental excursions to Chelsea on one side, and Greenwich on the other), which time he would spend pleasantly, but not magnificently, being limited in

pocket-money, and leading a kind of "Poor-Jack" life on the river.

In some respects, no life could be better for a lad. But it was not calculated to make his ear fine to the niceties of language, nor form his moralities on an entirely regular standard. Picking up his first scraps of vigorous English chiefly at Deptford and in the markets, and his first ideas of female tenderness and beauty among nymphs of the barge and the barrow, another boy might, perhaps, have become what people usually term "vulgar." But the original make and frame of Turner's mind being not vulgar, but as nearly as possible a combination of the minds of Keats and Dante, joining capricious waywardness, and intense openness to every fine pleasure of sense, and hot defiance of formal precedent, with a quite infinite tenderness, generosity, and desire of justice and truth—this kind of mind did not become vulgar, but very tolerant of vulgarity, even fond of it in some forms, and, on the outside, visibly infected by it, deeply enough; the curious result, in its combination of elements, being to most people wholly incomprehensible. It was as if a cable had been woven of blood-crimson silk, and then tarred on the outside. People handled it, and the tar came off on their hands; red gleams were seen through the black, underneath, at the places where it had been strained. Was it ochre?—said the world—or red lead?

## THE FINDING OF LIVINGSTONE

BEING AN EXTRACT FROM "HOW I FOUND  
LIVINGSTONE"

BY

HENRY MORTON STANLEY<sup>1</sup>

WE were now about three hundred yards from the village of Ujiji, and the crowds are dense about it. Suddenly I hear a voice on my right say:

"Good-morning, sir!"

Startled at hearing this greeting in the midst of such a crowd of black people, I turn sharply around in search of the man, and see him at my side, with the blackest of faces, but animated and joyous man dressed in a long white shirt, with a turban of American sheeting around his woolly head, and I ask:

"Who the mischief are you?"

"I am Susi, the servant of Dr. Livingstone," says he, smiling and showing a gleaming row of teeth.

"What! Is Dr. Livingstone here?"

"Yes, sir."

<sup>1</sup> Henry Morton Stanley (1841-1904) was a Welshman who emigrated to America, took part in the Civil War, and then became a journalist. In 1869 he was commissioned by the *New York Herald* to find the missionary, David Livingstone, who was exploring in Central Africa and had not been heard of for some time. It was a difficult task, but was finally accomplished on 10th November, 1871.



"In this village?"

"Yes, sir."

"Are you sure?"

"Sure, sure, sir. Why, I leave him just now."

"Good-morning, sir," said another voice.

"Hallo," said I, "is this another one?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, what is your name?"

"My name is Chumah, sir."

"What! are you Chumah, the friend of Wekotani?"

"Yes, sir."

"And is the Doctor well?"

"Not very well, sir."

"Where has he been so long?"

"In Manyema."

"Now, you, Susi, run and tell the Doctor I am coming."

"Yes, sir," and off he darted like a madman.

But by this time we were within two hundred yards of the village, and the multitude was getting denser, and almost preventing our march. Flag and streamers were out; Arabs and Wangwana were pushing their way through the natives in order to greet us, for, according to their account, we belonged to them. But the great wonder of all was, "How did you come from Unyanyembe?"

Soon Susi came running back, and asked me my name; he had told the Doctor that I was coming but the Doctor was too surprised to believe him and when the Doctor asked him my name Susi was rather staggered.

But, during Susi's absence, the news had been conveyed to the Doctor that it was surely a white

man that was coming, whose guns were firing and whose flag could be seen; and the great Arab magnates of Ujiji—Mohammed bin Sali, Sayd bin Majid, Abid bin Suliman, Mohammed bin Gharib, and others—had gathered together before the Doctor's house, and the Doctor had come out from his veranda to discuss the matter and await my arrival.

In the meantime the head of the expedition had halted, and the *kirangozi* was out of the ranks, holding his flag aloft, and Selim said to me, "I see the Doctor, sir. Oh, what an old man! He has got a white beard." And I—what would I not have given for a bit of friendly wilderness, where, unseen, I might vent my joy in some mad freak, such as idiotically biting my hand, turning a somersault, or slashing at trees, in order to allay those exciting feelings that were well-nigh uncontrollable. My heart beats fast, but I must not let my face betray my emotions, lest it shall detract from the dignity of a white man appearing under such extraordinary circumstances.

So I did that which I thought was most dignified. I pushed back the crowds, and, passing from the rear, walked down a living avenue of people until I came in front of the semicircle of Arabs, in the front of which stood the white man with the grey beard. As I advanced slowly towards him I noticed he was pale, looked wearied, had a grey beard, wore a bluish cap with a faded gold band round it, had on a red-sleeved waistcoat, and a pair of grey tweed trousers. I would have run to him, only I was a coward in the presence of such a mob—would have embraced him, only, being an Englishman, I did not

know how he would receive me;<sup>1</sup> so I did what cowardice and false pride suggested was the best thing—walked deliberately to him, took off my hat, and said:

“Dr. Livingstone, I presume?”

“Yes,” said he, with a kind smile, lifting his cap slightly.

I replace my hat on my head, and he puts on his cap, and we both grasp hands, and I then say aloud:

“I thank God, Doctor, I have been permitted to see you.”

He answered, “I feel thankful that I am here to welcome you.”

I turn to the Arabs, take off my hat to them in response to the saluting chorus of “Yambos” I receive, and the Doctor introduces them to me by name. Then, oblivious of the crowds, oblivious of

<sup>1</sup> “This Englishman, as I afterwards found, was a military man returning to his country from India, and crossing the desert at this part in order to go through Palestine. As for me, I had come pretty straight from England, and so here we met in the wilderness at about half-way from our respective starting-points. As we approached each other, it became with me a question whether we should speak; I thought it likely that the stranger would accost me, and in the event of his doing so, I was quite ready to be as sociable and chatty as I could be, according to my nature; but still I could not think of anything particular that I had to say to him; of course, among civilised people, the not having anything to say is no excuse at all for not speaking, but I was shy, and indolent, and I felt no great wish to stop and talk like a morning visitor, in the midst of those broad solitudes. The traveller perhaps felt as I did, for except that we lifted our hands to our caps, and waved our arms in courtesy, we passed each other as if we had passed in Bond Street.”—KINGLAKE'S *Eothen*.

the men who shared with me my dangers, we—Livingstone and I—turn our faces towards his *tembe*. He points to the veranda or, rather, mud platform under the broad overhanging eaves; he points to his own particular seat, which I see his age and experience in Africa has suggested, namely, a straw mat, with a goatskin over it, and another skin nailed against the wall to protect his back from contact with the cold mud. I protest against taking this seat, which so much more befits him than me, but the Doctor will not yield: I must take it.

We are seated—the Doctor and I—with our backs to the wall. The Arabs take seats on our left. More than a thousand natives are in our front, filling the whole square densely, indulging their curiosity, and discussing the fact of two white men meeting at Ujiji—one just come from Manyuema, in the west, the other from Unyanyembe, in the east.<sup>1</sup>

## ST. GUIDO

BEING A PAPER FROM "THE OPEN AIR"

BY

RICHARD JEFFERIES

ST. GUIDO ran out at the garden gate into a sandy lane, and down the lane till he came to a grassy bank. He caught hold of the bunches of grass and so pulled himself up. There was a footpath on the top which went straight in between fir-trees, and as he ran along they stood on each side of him like green walls. They

<sup>1</sup> Copyright in the United States by Charles Scribner's Sons.

were very near together, and even at the top the space between them was so narrow that the sky seemed to come down, and the clouds to be sailing but just over them, as if they would catch and tear in the fir-trees. The path was so little used that it had grown green, and as he ran he knocked dead branches out of his way. Just as he was getting tired of running he reached the end of the path, and came out into a wheat-field. The wheat did not grow very closely, and the spaces were filled with azure corn-flowers. St. Guido thought he was safe away now, so he stopped to look.

Those thoughts and feelings which are not sharply defined but have a haze of distance and beauty about them are always the dearest. His name was not really Guido, but those who loved him had called him so in order to try and express their hearts about him. For they thought if a great painter could be a little boy, then he would be something like this one. They were not very learned in the history of painters: they had heard of Raphael, but Raphael was too elevated, too much of the sky, and of Titian, but Titian was fond of feminine loveliness, and in the end somebody said Guido was a dreamy name, as if it belonged to one who was full of faith. Those golden curls shaking about his head as he ran and filling the air with radiance round his brow looked like a nimbus or circlet of glory. So they called him St. Guido, and a very, very wild saint he was.

St. Guido stopped in the cornfield, and looked all round. There were the fir-trees behind him—a thick wall of green bushes on the right and the left, and the wheat sloped down towards an ash-copse in the

hollow. No one was in the field, only the fir-trees, the green hedges, the yellow wheat, and the sun overhead. Guido kept quite still, because he expected that in a minute the magic would begin, and something would speak to him. His cheeks which had been flushed with running grew less hot, but I cannot tell you the exact colour they were, for his skin was so white and clear, it would not tan under the sun, yet being always out of doors it had taken the faintest tint of golden brown mixed with rosiness. His blue eyes which had been wide open, as they always were when full of mischief, became softer, and his long eyelashes drooped over them. But as the magic did not begin, Guido walked on slowly into the wheat, which rose nearly to his head, though it was not yet so tall as it would be before the reapers came. He did not break any of the stalks, or bend them down and step on them; he passed between them, and they yielded on either side. The wheat-ears were pale gold, having just left off their green, and they surrounded him on all sides as if he were bathing.

A butterfly painted a velvety red with white spots came floating along the surface of the corn, and played round his cap, which was a little higher, and was so tinted by the sun that the butterfly was inclined to settle on it. Guido put up his hand to catch the butterfly, forgetting his secret in his desire to touch it. The butterfly was too quick—with a snap of his wings disdainfully mocking the idea of catching him, away he went. Guido nearly stepped on a humble-bee—buzz-zz!—the bee was so alarmed he actually crept up Guido's knickers to the knee, and even then

knocked himself against a wheat-ear when he started to fly. Guido kept quite still while the humble-bee was on his knee, knowing that he should not be stung if he did not move. He knew, too, that humble-bees have stings though people often say they have not, and the reason people think they do not possess them is because humble-bees are so good-natured and never sting unless they are very much provoked.

Next he picked a corn buttercup; the flowers were much smaller than the great buttercups which grew in the meadows, and these were not golden but coloured like brass. His foot caught in a creeper, and he nearly tumbled—it was a bine of bindweed which went twisting round and round two stalks of wheat in a spiral, bidding them together as if some one had wound string about them. There was one ear of wheat which had black specks on it, and another which had so much black that the grains seemed changed and gone leaving nothing but blackness. He touched it and it stained his hands like a dark powder, and then he saw that it was not perfectly black as charcoal is, it was a little red. Something was burning up the corn there just as if fire had been set to the ears. Guido went on and found another place where there was hardly any wheat at all, and those stalks that grew were so short they only came above his knee. The wheat-ears were thin and small, and looked as if there was nothing but chaff. But this place being open was full of flowers, such lovely azure cornflowers, which the people call bluebottles.

Guido took two; they were curious flowers with knobs surrounded with little blue flowers like a lady's

bonnet. They were a beautiful blue, not like any other blue, not like the violets in the garden, or the sky over the trees, or the geranium in the grass, or the bird's-eyes by the path. He loved them and held them tight in his hand, and went on, leaving the red pimpernel wide open to the dry air behind him, but the May-weed was everywhere. The May-weed had white flowers like a moon-daisy, but not so large, and leaves like moss. He could not walk without stepping on these mossy tufts, though he did not want to hurt them. So he stooped and stroked the moss-like leaves and said, "I do not want to hurt you, but you grow so thick I cannot help it." In a minute afterwards as he was walking he heard a quick rush, and saw the wheat-ears sway this way and that as if a puff of wind had struck them.

Guido stood still and his eyes opened very wide, he had forgotten to cut a stick to fight with: he watched the wheat-ears sway, and could see them move for some distance, and he did not know what it was. Perhaps it was a wild boar or a yellow lion, or some creature no one had ever seen; he would not go back, but he wished he had cut a nice stick. Just then a swallow swooped down and came flying over the wheat so close that Guido almost felt the flutter of his wings, and as he passed he whispered to Guido that it was only a hare. "Then why did he run away?" said Guido; "I should not have hurt him." But the swallow had gone up high into the sky again, and did not hear him. All the time Guido was descending the slope, for little feet always go down the hill as water does, and when he looked back he found that he had left the fir-trees so far



behind he was in the middle of the field. If anyone had looked they could hardly have seen him, and if he had taken his cap off they could not have done so because the yellow curls would be so much the same colour as the yellow corn. He stooped to see how nicely he could hide himself, then he knelt, and in a minute sat down, so that the wheat rose up high above him.

Another humble-bee went over along the tips of the wheat—burr-rr—as he passed; then a scarlet fly, and next a bright yellow wasp who was telling a friend flying behind him that he knew where there was such a capital piece of wood to bite up into tiny pieces and make into paper for the nest in the thatch, but his friend wanted to go to the house because there was a pear quite ripe there on the wall. Next came a moth, and after the moth a golden fly, and three gnats, and a mouse ran along the dry ground with a curious sniffing rustle close to Guido. A shrill cry came down out of the air, and looking up he saw two swifts turning circles, and as they passed each other they shrieked—their voices were so shrill they shrieked. They were only saying that in a month their little swifts in the slates would be able to fly. While he sat so quiet on the ground and hidden by the wheat, he heard a cuckoo such a long way off it sounded like a watch when it is covered up. "Cuckoo" did not come full and distinct—it was such a tiny little "cuckoo" caught in the hollow of Guido's ear. The cuckoo must have been a mile away.

Suddenly he thought something went over, and yet he did not see it—perhaps it was the shadow—

and he looked up and saw a large bird not very far up, not farther than he could fling, or shoot his arrows, and the bird was fluttering his wings, but did not move away farther, as if he had been tied in the air. Guido knew it was a hawk, and the hawk was staying there to see if there was a mouse or a little bird in the wheat. After a minute the hawk stopped fluttering and lifted his wings together as a butterfly does when he shuts his, and down the hawk came, straight into the corn. "Go away!" shouted Guido, jumping up and flinging his cap, and the hawk, dreadfully frightened and terribly cross, checked himself and rose again with an angry rush. So the mouse escaped, but Guido could not find his cap for some time. Then he went on, and still the ground sloping sent him down the hill till he came close to the copse.

Some sparrows came out from the copse, and he stopped and saw one of them perch on a stalk of wheat, with one foot above the other sideways, so that he could pick at the ear and get the corn. Guido watched the sparrow clear the ear, then he moved, and the sparrows flew back to the copse, where they chattered at him for disturbing them. There was a ditch between the corn and the copse, and a streamlet; he picked up a stone and threw it in, and the splash frightened a rabbit, who slipped over the bank and into a hole. The boughs of an oak reached out across to the corn, and made so pleasant a shade that Guido, who was very hot from walking in the sun, sat down on the bank of the streamlet with his feet dangling over it, and watched the floating grass sway slowly as the water ran. Gently he leaned back till

his back rested on the sloping ground—he raised one knee, and left the other foot over the verge where the tip of the tallest rushes touched it. Before he had been there a minute he remembered the secret which a fern had taught him.

First, if he wanted to know anything, or to hear a story, or what the grass was saying, or the oak-leaves singing, he must be careful not to interfere as he had done just now with the butterfly by trying to catch him. Fortunately, that butterfly was a nice butterfly, and very kind-hearted, but sometimes, if you interfered with one thing, it would tell another thing, and they would all know in a moment, and stop talking, and never say a word. Once, while they were all talking pleasantly, Guido caught a fly in his hand; he felt his hand tickle as the fly stepped on it, and he shut up his little fist so quickly he caught the fly in the hollow between the palm and his fingers. The fly went buzz, and rushed to get out, but Guido laughed, so the fly buzzed again, and just told the grass, and the grass told the bushes, and everything knew in a moment, and Guido never heard another word all that day. Yet sometimes now they all knew something about him, they would go on talking. You see, they all rather petted and spoiled him. Next, if Guido did not hear them conversing, the fern said he must touch a little piece of grass and put it against his cheek, or a leaf, and kiss it, and say, "Leaf, leaf, tell them I am here."

Now, while he was lying down, and the tip of the rushes touched his foot, he remembered this, so he moved the rush with his foot and said, "Rush, rush, tell them I am here." Immediately there came a

little wind, and the wheat swung to and fro, the oak-leaves rustled, the rushes bowed, and the shadows slipped forwards and back again. Then it was still, and the nearest wheat-ear to Guido nodded his head, and said in a very low tone, "Guido, dear, just this minute I do not feel very happy, although the sunshine is so warm, because I have been thinking, for we have been in one or other of these fields of your papa's a thousand years this very year. Every year we have been sown, and weeded, and reaped, and garnered. Every year the sun has ripened us and the rain made us grow, every year for a thousand years."

"What did you see all that time?" said Guido.

"The swallows came," said the Wheat, "and flew over us, and sang a little sweet song, and then they went up into the chimneys and built their nests."

"At my house?" said Guido

"Oh, no, dear, the house I was then thinking of is gone, like a leaf withered and lost. But we have not forgotten any of the songs they sang us, nor have the swallows that you see to-day—one of them spoke to you just now—forgotten what we said to their ancestors. Then the blackbirds came out in us and ate the creeping creatures, so that they should not hurt us, and went up into the oaks and whistled such beautiful sweet low whistles. Not in these oaks, dear, where the blackbirds whistle to-day; even the very oaks have gone, though they were so strong that one of them defied the lightning, and lived years and years after it struck him. One of the very oldest of the old oaks in the copse, dear, is his grandchild. If you go into the copse you will find an oak which has

only one branch; he is so old, he has only that branch left. He sprang up from an acorn dropped from an oak that grew from an acorn dropped from the oak the lightning struck. So that is three oak lives, Guido dear, back to the time I was thinking of just now. And that oak under whose shadow you are now lying is the fourth of them, and he is quite young, though he is so big.

"A jay sowed the acorn from which he grew up; the jay was in the oak with one branch, and some one frightened him, and as he flew he dropped the acorn which he had in his bill just there, and now you are lying in the shadow of the tree. So you see it is a very long time ago when the blackbirds came and whistled up in those oaks I was thinking of, and that was why I was not very happy."

"But you have heard the blackbirds whistling ever since?" said Guido; "and there was such a big black one up in our cherry tree this morning, and I shot my arrow at him and very nearly hit him. Besides, there is a blackbird whistling now—you listen. There, he's somewhere in the copse. Why can't you listen to him, and be happy now?"

"I will be happy, dear, as you are here, but still it is a long, long time, and then I think, after I am dead, and there is more wheat in my place, the blackbirds will go on whistling for another thousand years after me. For of course I did not hear them all that time ago myself, dear, but the wheat which was before me heard them and told me. They told me, too, and I know it is true, that the cuckoo came and called all day till the moon shone at night, and began again in the morning before the dew had sparkled in the

sunrise. The dew dries very soon on wheat, Guido dear, because wheat is so dry; first the sunrise makes the tips of the wheat ever so faintly rosy, then it grows yellow, then as the heat increases it becomes white at noon, and golden in the afternoon, and white again under the moonlight. Besides which wide shadows come over from the clouds, and a wind always follows the shadow and waves us, and every time we sway to and fro that alters our colour. A rough wind gives us one tint, and heavy rain another, and we look different on a cloudy day to what we do on a sunny one. All these colours changed on us when the black-bird was whistling in the oak the lightning struck, the fourth one backwards from me; and it makes me sad to think that after four more oaks have gone, the same colours will come on the wheat that will grow then. It is thinking about those past colours, and songs, and leaves, and of the colours and the sunshine, and the songs, and the leaves that will come in the future that makes to-day so much. It makes to-day a thousand years long backwards, and a thousand years long forwards, and makes the sun so warm, and the air so sweet, and the butterflies so lovely, and the hum of the bees, and everything so delicious. We cannot have enough of it."

"No, that we cannot," said Guido. "Go on, you talk so nice and low. I feel sleepy and jolly. Talk away, old Wheat."

"Let me see," said the Wheat. "Once on a time while the men were knocking us out of the ear on a floor with flails, which are sticks with little hinges——"

"As if I did not know what a flail was!" said

Guido. "I hit old John with the flail, and Ma gave him a shilling not to be cross."

"While they were knocking us with the hard sticks," the Wheat went on, "we heard them talking about a king who was shot with an arrow like yours in the forest—it slipped from a tree, and went into him instead of into the deer. And long before that the men came up the river—the stream in the ditch there runs into the river—in rowing ships—how you would like one to play in, Guido! For they were not like the ships now which are machines, they were rowing ships—men's ships—and came right up into the land ever so far, all along the river up to the place where the stream in the ditch runs in; just where your papa took you in the punt, and you got the water-lilies, the white ones."

"And wetted my sleeve right up my arm—oh, I know! I can row you, old Wheat; I can row as well as my papa can."

"But since the rowing ships came, the ploughs have turned up this ground a thousand times," said the Wheat; "and each time the furrows smelt sweeter, and this year they smelt sweetest of all. The horses have such glossy coats, and such fine manes, and they are so strong and beautiful. They drew the ploughs along and made the ground give up its sweetness and savour, and while they were doing it, the spiders in the copse spun their silk along from the ashpoles, and the mist in the morning weighed down their threads. It was so delicious to come out of the clods as we pushed our green leaves up and felt the rain, and the wind, and the warm sun. Then a little bird came in the copse and called, 'Sip—sip,

sip, sip, sip,' such a sweet low song, and the larks ran along the ground in between us, and there were blue-bells in the copse, and anemones; till by-and-by the sun made us yellow, and the blue flowers that you have in your hand came out. I cannot tell you how many there have been of these flowers since the oak was struck by lightning, in all the thousand years there must have been altogether—I cannot tell you how many."

"Why didn't I pick them all?" said Guido.

"Do you know," said the Wheat, "we have thought so much more, and felt so much more, since your people took us, and ploughed for us, and sowed us, and reaped us. We are not like the same wheat we used to be before your people touched us, when we grew wild, and there were huge great things in the woods and marshes which I will not tell you about lest you should be frightened. Since we have felt your hands, and you have touched us, we have felt so much more. Perhaps that was why I was not very happy till you came, for I was thinking quite as much about your people as about us, and how all the flowers of all those thousand years, and all the songs, and the sunny days were gone, and all the people were gone, too, who had heard the blackbirds whistle in the oak the lightning struck. And those that are alive now—there will be cuckoos calling, and the eggs in the thrushes' nests, and blackbirds whistling, and blue cornflowers, a thousand years after every one of them is gone.

"So that is why it is so sweet this minute, and why I want you, and your people, dear, to be happy now and to have all these things, and to agree so as not to



be so anxious and careworn, but to come out with us, or sit by us, and listen to the blackbirds, and hear the wind rustle us, and be happy. Oh, I wish I could make them happy, and do away with all their care and anxiety, and give you all heaps and heaps of flowers! Don't go away, darling, do you lie still, and I will talk and sing to you, and you can pick some more flowers when you get up. There is a beautiful shadow there, and I heard the streamlet say that he would sing a little to you, he is not very big, he cannot sing very loud. By-and-by, I know, the sun will make us as dry as dry, and darker, and then the reapers will come while the spiders are spinning their silk again—this time it will come floating in the blue air, for the air seems blue if you look up.

"It is a great joy to your people, dear, when the reaping time arrives: the harvest is a great joy to you when the thistle-down comes rolling along in the wind. So that I shall be happy even when the reapers cut me down, because I know it is for you, and your people, my love. The strong men will come to us gladly, and the women, and the little children will sit in the shade and gather great white trumpets of convolvulus, and come to tell their mothers how they saw the young partridges in the next field. But there is one thing we do not like, and that is, all the labour and the misery. Why cannot your people have us without so much labour, and why are so many of you unhappy? Why cannot they be all happy with us as you are, dear? For hundreds and hundreds of years now the wheat every year has been sorrowful for your people, and I think we get more sorrowful every year about it, because as I was telling you just now the flowers go,

and the swallows go, the old, old oaks go, and that oak will go, under the shade of which you are lying Guido; and if your people do not gather the flowers now, and watch the swallows, and listen to the black birds whistling, as you are listening now while I talk then Guido, my love, they will never pick any flowers nor hear any birds' songs. They think they will they think that when they have toiled, and worked a long time, almost all their lives, then they will come to the flowers, and the birds, and be joyful in the sunshine. But no, it will not be so, for then they will be old themselves, and their ears dull, and their eyes dim, so that the birds will sound a great distance off and the flowers will not seem bright.

"Of course, we know that the greatest part of your people cannot help themselves, and must labour or like the reapers till their ears are full of the dust of age. That only makes us more sorrowful, and anxious that things should be different. I do not suppose we should think about them had we not been in man's hand so long that now we have got to fee with man. Every year makes it more pitiful, because then there are more flowers gone, and added to the vast numbers of those gone before, and never gathered or looked at, though they could have given so much pleasure. And all the work and labour, and thinking and reading and learning that your people do ends in nothing—not even one flower. We cannot understand why it should be so. There are thousands of wheat-ears in this field, more than you would know how to write down with your pencil, though you have learned your tables, sir. Yet all of us thinking, and talking, cannot understand why it is when we con-

sider how clever your people are, and how they bring ploughs and steam-engines, and put up wires along the roads to tell you things when you are miles away, and sometimes we are sown where we can hear the hum, hum all day of the children learning in the school. The butterflies flutter over us, and the sun shines, and the doves are very, very happy at their nest, but the children go on hum, hum inside this house, and learn, learn. So we suppose you must be very clever, and yet you cannot manage this. All your work is wasted, and you labour in vain—you dare not leave it a minute.

“If you left it a minute it would all be gone; it does not mount up and make a store, so that all of you could sit by it and be happy. Directly you leave off you are hungry, and thirsty, and miserable like the beggars that tramp along the dusty road here. All the thousand years of labour since this field was first ploughed have not stored up anything for you. It would not matter about the work so much if you were only happy; the bees work every year, but they are happy; the doves build a nest every year, but they are very, very happy. We think it must be because you do not come out to us and be with us, and think more as we do. It is not because your people have not got plenty to eat and drink—you have as much as the bees. Why, just look at us! Look at the wheat that grows all over the world; all the figures that were ever written in pencil could not tell how much, it is such an immense quantity. Yet your people starve and die of hunger every now and then, and we have seen the wretched beggars tramping along the road. We have known of times when there

was a great pile of us, almost a hill piled up, it was not in this country, it was in another warmer country, and yet no one dared to touch it—they died at the bottom of the hill of wheat. The earth is full of skeletons of people who have died of hunger. They are dying now this minute in your big cities, with nothing but stones all round them, stone walls and stone streets; not jolly stones like those you threw in the water, dear—hard, unkind stones that make them cold and let them die, while we are growing here, millions of us, in the sunshine with the butterflies floating over us. This makes us unhappy; I was very unhappy this morning till you came running over and played with us.

“It is not because there is not enough: it is because your people are so short-sighted, so jealous and selfish, and so curiously infatuated with things that are not so good as your old toys which you have flung away and forgotten. And you teach the children hum, hum all day to care about such silly things, and to work for them and look to them as the object of their lives. It is because you do not share us among you without price or difference; because you do not share the great earth among you fairly, without spite and jealousy and avarice, because you will not agree; you silly, foolish people to let all the flowers wither for a thousand years while you keep each other at a distance, instead of agreeing and sharing them! Is there something in you—as there is poison in the nightshade, you know it, dear, your papa told you not to touch it—is there a sort of poison in your people that works them up into a hatred of one another? Why, then, do you

not agree and have all things, all the great earth can give you, just as we have the sunshine and the rain? How happy your people could be if they would only agree! But you go on teaching even the little children to follow the same silly objects, hum, hum, hum, all the day, and they will grow up to hate each other, and to try which can get the most round things—you have one in your pocket."

"Sixpence," said Guido. "It's quite a new one."

"And other things quite as silly," the Wheat continued. "All the time the flowers are flowering, but they will go, even the oaks will go. We think the reason you do not all have plenty, and why you do not do only just a little work, and why you die of hunger if you leave off, and why so many of you are unhappy in body and mind, and all the misery is because you have not got a spirit like the wheat, like us; you will not agree, and you will not share, and you will hate each other, and you will be so avaricious, and you will *not* touch the flowers, or go into the sunshine (you would rather half of you died among the hard stones first), and you will teach your children, hum, hum, to follow in some foolish course that has caused you all this unhappiness a thousand years, and you will *not* have a spirit like us, and feel like us. Till you have a spirit like us, and feel like us, you will never, never be happy. Lie still, dear, the shadow of the oak is broad and will not move from you for a long time yet."

"But perhaps Paul will come up to my house, and Percy and Morna."

"Look up in the oak very quietly, don't move, just open your eyes and look," said the Wheat, who was

very cunning. Guido looked and saw a lovely little bird climbing up a branch. It was chequered, black and white, like a very small magpie, only without such a long tail, and it had a spot of red about its neck. It was a pied woodpecker, not the large green woodpecker, but another kind. Guido saw it go round the branch, and then some way up, and round again till it came to a place that pleased it, and then the woodpecker struck the bark with its bill, tap-tap. The sound was quite loud, ever so much more noise than such a tiny bill seemed able to make. Tap-tap! If Guido had not been still so that the bird had come close he would never have found it among the leaves. Tap—tap! After it had picked out all the insects there, the woodpecker flew away over the ashpoles of the copse.

"I should just like to stroke him," said Guido. "If I climbed up into the oak perhaps he would come again, and I could catch him."

"No," said the Wheat, "he only comes once a day."

"Then tell me stories," said Guido, imperiously.

"I will if I can," said the Wheat. "Once upon a time, when the oak the lightning struck was still living, and when the wheat was green in this very field, a man came staggering out of the wood, and walked out into it. He had an iron helmet on, and he was wounded, and his blood stained the green wheat red as he walked. He tried to get to the streamlet, which was wider then, Guido dear, to drink, for he knew it was there, but he could not reach it. He fell down and died in the green wheat, dear, for he was very much hurt with a sharp spear, but more so with hunger and thirst."

"I am so sorry," said Guido; "and now I look at you, why you are all thirsty and dry, you nice old Wheat, and the ground is as dry as dry under you; I will get you something to drink."

And down he scrambled into the ditch, setting his foot firm on a root, for though he was so young, he knew how to get down to the water without wetting his feet, or falling in, and how to climb up a tree, and everything jolly. Guido dipped his hand in the streamlet, and flung the water over the wheat, five or six good sprinklings till the drops hung on the wheat-ears. Then he said, "Now you are better."

"Yes, dear, thank you, my love," said the Wheat, who was very pleased, though of course the water was not enough to wet its roots. Still it was pleasant, like a very little shower. Guido lay down on his chest this time, with his elbows on the ground, propping his head up, and as he now faced the wheat he could see in between the stalks.

"Lie still," said the Wheat, "the corncrake is not very far off, he has come up here since your papa told the mowers to mow the meadow, and very likely if you stay quiet you will see him. If you do not understand all I say, never mind, dear; the sunshine is warm, but not too warm in the shade, and we all love you, and want you to be as happy as ever you can be."

"It is jolly to be quite hidden like this," said Guido. "No one could find me; if Paul were to look all day he would never find me; even Papa could not find me. Now go on and tell me stories."

"Ever so many times, when the oak the lightning struck was young," said the Wheat, "great stags

used to come out of the wood and feed on the green wheat; it was early in the morning when they came. Such great stags, and so proud, and yet so timid, the least thing made them go bound, bound, bound."

"Oh, I know!" said Guido; "I saw some jump over the fence in the forest—I am going there again soon. If I take my bow I will shoot one!"

"But there are no deer here now," said the Wheat; "they have been gone a long, long time; though I think your papa has one of their antlers."

"Now, how did you know that?" said Guido; "you have never been to our house, and you cannot see in from here because the fir copse is in the way; how do you find out these things?"

"Oh!" said the Wheat, laughing, "we have lots of ways of finding out things. Don't you remember the swallow that swooped down and told you not to be frightened at the hare? The swallow has his nest at your house, and he often flies by your windows and looks in, and he told me. The birds tell us lots of things, and all about what is over the sea."

"But that is not a story," said Guido.

"Once upon a time," said the Wheat, "when the oak the lightning struck was alive, your papa's papa's papa, ever so much farther back than that, had all the fields round here, all you can see from Acre Hill. And do you know it happened that in time every one of them was lost or sold, and your family, Guido dear, were homeless—no house, no garden or orchard, and no dogs or guns, or anything jolly. One day the papa that was then came along the road with his little Guido, and they were beggars, dear, and



had no place to sleep, and they slept all night in the wheat in this very field close to where the hawthorn bush grows now—where you picked the May flowers, you know, my love. They slept there all the summer night, and the fern owls flew to and fro, and the bats and crickets chirped, and the stars shone faintly, as if they were made pale by the heat. The poor papa never had a house, but that little Guido lived to grow up a great man, and he worked so hard, and he was so clever, and every one loved him, which was the best of all things. He bought this very field and then another, and another, and got such a lot of the old fields back again, and the goldfinches sang for joy, and so did the larks and the thrushes, because they said what a kind man he was. Then his son got some more of them, till at last your papa bought ever so many more. But we often talk about the little boy who slept in the wheat in this field, which was his father's father's field. If only the wheat then could have helped him, and been kind to him, you may be sure it would. We love you so much we like to see the very crumbs left by the men who do the hoeing when they eat their crusts; we wish they could have more to eat, but we like to see their crumbs, which you know are made of wheat, so that we have done them some good at least."

"That's not a story," said Guido.

"There's a gold coin here somewhere," said the Wheat, "such a pretty one, it would make a capital button for your jacket, dear, or for your mamma; that is all any sort of money is good for; I wish all the coins were made into buttons for little Guido."

"Where is it?" said Guido.

"I can't exactly tell where it is," said the Wheat. "It was very near me once, and I thought the next thunder's rain would wash it down into the streamlet—it has been here ever so long, it came here first just after the oak the lightning split died. And it has been rolled about by the ploughs ever since, and no one has ever seen it; I thought it must go into the ditch at last, but when the men came to hoe one of them knocked it back, and then another kicked it along—it was covered with earth—and then, one day, a rook came and split the clod open with his bill, and pushed the pieces first one side and then the other, and the coin went one way, but I did not see; I must ask a humble-bee, or a mouse, or a mole, or some one who knows more about it. It is very thin, so that if the rook's bill had struck it, his strong bill would have made a dint in it, and there is, I think, a ship marked on it."

"Oh, I must have it! A ship! Ask a humble-bee directly; be quick!"

Bang! There was a loud report, a gun had gone off in the copse.

"That's my papa," shouted Guido. "I'm sure that was my papa's gun!" Up he jumped, and getting down the ditch, stepped across the water, and, seizing a hazel-bough to help himself, climbed up the bank. At the top he slipped through the fence by the oak and so into the copse. He was in such a hurry he did not mind the thistles or the boughs that whipped him as they sprang back. He scrambled through, meeting the vapour of the gun-powder and the smell of sulphur. In a minute he found a green path, and in the path was his papa,

who had just shot a cruel crow. The crow had been eating the birds' eggs, and picking the little birds to pieces.

## FRENCH PRISONERS

BEING THE FIRST CHAPTER OF "ST. IVES"

BY

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

IT was in the month of May 1813 that I was so unlucky as to fall at last into the hands of the enemy. My knowledge of the English language had marked me out for a certain employment. Though I cannot conceive a soldier refusing to incur the risk, yet to be hanged for a spy is a disgusting business; and I was relieved to be held a prisoner of war. Into the Castle of Edinburgh, standing in the midst of that city on the summit of an extraordinary rock, I was cast with several hundred fellow-sufferers, all privates like myself, and the more part of them, by an accident, very ignorant, plain fellows. My English, which had brought me into that scrape, now helped me very materially to bear it. I had a thousand advantages. I was often called to play the part of an interpreter, whether of orders or complaints, and thus brought in relations, sometimes of mirth, sometimes almost of friendship, with the officers in charge. A young lieutenant singled me out to be his adversary at chess, a game in which I was extremely proficient, and would reward me for my gambits with excellent

cigars. The major of the battalion took lessons of French from me while at breakfast, and was sometimes so obliging as to have me to join him at the meal. Chevenix was his name. He was stiff as a drum-major and selfish as an Englishman, but a fairly conscientious pupil and a fairly upright man. Little did I suppose that his ramrod body and frozen face would, in the end, step in between me and all my dearest wishes, that upon this precise, regular, icy soldierman my fortunes should so nearly shipwreck! I never liked, but yet I trusted him; and though it may seem but a trifle, I found his snuff-box with the bean in it come very welcome.

For it is strange how grown men and seasoned soldiers can go back in life; so that after but a little while in prison, which is after all the next best thing to being in the nursery, they grow absorbed in the most pitiful, childish interests, and a sugar biscuit or a pinch of snuff become things to follow after and scheme for!

We made but a poor show of prisoners. The officers had been all offered their parole, and had taken it. They lived mostly in suburbs of the city, lodging with modest families, and enjoyed their freedom and supported the almost continual evil tidings of the Emperor as best they might. It chanced I was the only gentleman among the privates who remained. A great part were ignorant Italians, of a regiment that had suffered heavily in Catalonia. The rest were mere diggers of the soil, treaders of grapes or hewers of wood, who had been suddenly and violently preferred to the glorious state of soldiers. We had but the one interest in common; each of us who had

any skill with his fingers passed the hours of his captivity in the making of little toys and *articles of Paris*; and the prison was daily visited at certain hours by a concourse of people of the country, come to exult over our distress, or—it is more tolerant to suppose—their own vicarious triumph. Some moved among us with a decency of shame or sympathy. Others were the most offensive personages in the world, gaped at us as if we had been baboons, sought to evangelise us to their rustic, northern religion as though we had been savages, or tortured us with intelligence of disasters to the arms of France. Good, bad, and indifferent, there was one alleviation to the annoyance of these visitors; for it was the practice of almost all to purchase some specimen of our rude handiwork. This led, amongst the prisoners, to a strong spirit of competition. Some were neat of hand, and (the genius of the French being always distinguished) could place upon sale little miracles of dexterity and taste. Some had a more engaging appearance; fine features were found to do as well as fine merchandise, and an air of youth in particular (as it appealed to the sentiment of pity in our visitors) to be a source of profit. Others again enjoyed some acquaintance with the language, and were able to recommend the more agreeably to purchasers such trifles as they had to sell. To the first of these advantages I could lay no claim, for my fingers were all thumbs. Some at least of the others I possessed; and finding much entertainment in our commerce, I did not suffer my advantages to rust. I have never despised the social arts, in which it is a national boast that every Frenchman should excel. For the

approach of particular sorts of visitors I had a particular manner of address, and even of appearance, which I could readily assume and change on the occasion rising. I never lost an opportunity to flatter either the person of my visitor, if it should be a lady, or, if it should be a man, the greatness of his country in war. And in case my compliments should miss their aim, I was always ready to cover my retreat with some agreeable pleasantry, which would often earn me the name of an "oddity" or a "droll fellow." In this way, although I was so left-handed a toy-maker, I made out to be rather a successful merchant; and found means to procure many little delicacies and alleviations, such as children or prisoners desire.

I am scarcely drawing the portrait of a very melancholy man. It is not indeed my character; and I had, in a comparison with my comrades, many reasons for content. In the first place, I had no family; I was an orphan and a bachelor; neither wife nor child awaited me in France. In the second, I had never wholly forgot the emotions with which I first found myself a prisoner; and although a military prison be not altogether a garden of delights, it is still preferable to a gallows. In the third, I am almost ashamed to say it, but I found a certain pleasure in our place of residence: being an obsolete and really mediæval fortress, high placed and commanding extraordinary prospects, not only over sea, mountain, and champaign, but actually over the thoroughfares of a capital city, which we could see blackened by day with the moving crowd of the inhabitants, and at night shining with lamps. And lastly, although I was not insensible to the restraints of prison or the

scantiness of our rations, I remembered I had sometimes eaten quite as ill in Spain, and had to mount guard and march perhaps a dozen leagues into the bargain. The first of my troubles, indeed, was the costume we were obliged to wear. There is a horrible practice in England to trick out in ridiculous uniforms, and as it were to brand in mass, not only convicts but military prisoners, and even the children in charity schools. I think some malignant genius has found his masterpiece of irony in the dress which we were condemned to wear: jacket, waistcoat, and trousers of a sulphur or mustard yellow, and a shirt of blue-and-white striped cotton. It was conspicuous, it was cheap, it pointed us out to laughter—we, who were old soldiers, used to arms, and some of us showing noble scars—like a set of lugubrious zanies at a fair. The old name of that rock on which our prison stood was (I have heard since then) the *Painted Hull*. Well, now it was all painted a bright yellow with our costumes; and the dress of the soldiers who guarded us being of course the essential British red rag, we made up together the elements of a lively picture of hell. I have again and again looked round upon my fellow-prisoners, and felt my anger rise, and choked upon tears, to behold them thus parodied. The more part, as I have said, were peasants, somewhat bettered perhaps by the drill-sergeant, but for all that ungainly, loutish fellows, with no more than a mere barrack-room smartness of address: indeed, you could have seen our army nowhere more discreditably represented than in this Castle of Edinburgh. And I used to see myself in fancy, and blush. It seemed that my more elegant

carriage would but point the insult of the travesty. And I remembered the days when I wore the coarse but honourable coat of a soldier; and remembered further back how many of the noble, the fair, and the gracious had taken a delight to tend my childhood. . . . But I must not recall these tender and sorrowful memories twice; their place is further on, and I am now upon other business. The perfidy of the Britannic Government stood nowhere more openly confessed than in one particular of our discipline: that we were shaved twice in the week. To a man who has loved all his life to be fresh shaven, can a more irritating indignity be devised? Monday and Thursday were the days. Take the Thursday, and conceive the picture I must present by Sunday evening! And Saturday, which was almost as bad, was the great day for visitors.

Those who came to our market were of all qualities, men and women, the lean and the stout, the plain and the fairly pretty. Sure, if people at all understood the power of beauty, there would be no prayers addressed except to Venus; and the mere privilege of beholding a comely woman is worth paying for. Our visitors, upon the whole, were not much to boast of; and yet, sitting in a corner and very much ashamed of myself and my absurd appearance, I have again and again tasted the finest, the rarest, and the most ethereal pleasures in a glance of an eye that I should never see again—and never wanted to. The flower of the hedgerow and the star in heaven satisfy and delight us: how much more the look of that exquisite being who was created to bear and rear, to madden and rejoice, mankind!



There was one young lady in particular, about eighteen or nineteen, tall, of a gallant carriage, and with a profusion of hair in which the sun found threads of gold. As soon as she came in the courtyard (and she was a rather frequent visitor) it seemed I was aware of it. She had an air of angelic candour, yet of a high spirit; she stepped like a Diana, every movement was noble and free. One day there was a strong east wind; the banner was straining at the flagstaff; below us the smoke of the city chimneys blew hither and thither in a thousand crazy variations; and away out on the Forth we could see the ships lying down to it and scudding. I was thinking what a vile day it was, when she appeared. Her hair blew in the wind with changes of colour, her garments moulded her with the accuracy of sculpture; the ends of her shawl fluttered about her ear and were caught in again with an inimitable deftness. You have seen a pool on a gusty day, how it suddenly sparkles and flashes like a thing alive? So this lady's face had become animated and coloured; and as I saw her standing, somewhat inclined, her lips parted, a divine trouble in her eyes, I could have clapped my hands in applause, and was ready to acclaim her a genuine daughter of the winds. What put it in my head, I know not: perhaps because it was a Thursday and I was new from the razor; but I determined to engage her attention no later than that day. She was approaching that part of the court in which I sat with my merchandise, when I observed her handkerchief to escape from her hands and fall to the ground; the next moment the wind had taken it up and carried it within my reach. I was on foot at once: I had

forgot my mustard-coloured clothes, I had forgot the private soldier and his salute. Bowing deeply, I offered her the slip of cambric.

"Madam," said I, "your handkerchief. The wind brought it me."

I met her eyes fully.

"I thank you, sir," said she.

"The wind brought it me," I repeated. "May I not take it for an omen? You have an English proverb, 'It's an ill wind that blows nobody good'."

"Well," she said, with a smile, "'One good turn deserves another.' I will see what you have."

She followed me to where my wares were spread out under lee of a piece of cannon.

"Alas, mademoiselle!" said I, "I am no very perfect craftsman. This is supposed to be a house, and you see the chimneys are awry. You may call this a box if you are very indulgent; but see where my tool slipped! Yes, I am afraid you may go from one to another, and find a flaw in everything. *Failures for Sale* should be on my signboard. I do not keep a shop; I keep a Humorous Museum." I cast a smiling glance about my display, and then at her, and instantly became grave. "Strange, is it not," I added, "that a grown man and a soldier should be engaged upon such trash, and a sad heart produce anything so funny to look at?"

An unpleasant voice summoned her at this moment by the name of Flora, and she made a hasty purchase and rejoined her party.

A few days after she came again. But I must first tell you how she came to be so frequent. Her aunt was one of those terrible British old maids, of which

the world has heard much, and having nothing whatever to do, and a word or two of French, she had taken what she called an *interest in the French prisoners*. A big, bustling, bold old lady, she flounced about our market-place with insufferable airs of patronage and condescension. She bought, indeed, with liberality, but her manner of studying us through a quizzing-glass, and playing cicerone to her followers, acquitted us of any gratitude. She had a tail behind her of heavy, obsequious old gentlemen, or dull, giggling misses, to whom she appeared to be an oracle. "This one can really carve prettily: is he not a quiz with his big whiskers?" she would say. "And this one," indicating myself with her gold eye-glass, "is, I assure you, quite an oddity." The oddity, you may be certain, ground his teeth. She had a way of standing in our midst, nodding around, and addressing us in what she imagined to be French: "Bienne, hommes! ça va bienne?" I took the freedom to reply in the same lingo: "Bienne, femme! ça va couci-couci tout d'même, la bourgeoise!" And at that, when we had all laughed with a little more heartiness than was entirely civil, "I told you he was quite an oddity!" says she in triumph. Needless to say, these passages were before I had remarked the niece.

The aunt came on the day in question with a following rather more than usually large, which she manoeuvred to and fro about the market and lectured to at rather more than usual length, and with rather less than her accustomed tact. I kept my eyes down, but they were ever fixed in the same direction, quite in vain. The aunt came and went, and pulled us out,

and showed us off, like caged monkeys; but the niece kept herself on the outskirts of the crowd and on the opposite side of the courtyard, and departed at last as she had come, without a sign. Closely as I had watched her, I could not say her eyes had ever rested on me for an instant; and my heart was overwhelmed with bitterness and blackness. I tore out her detested image; I felt I was done with her for ever; I laughed at myself savagely, because I had thought to please; when I lay down at night sleep forsook me, and I lay and rolled and gloated on her charms, and cursed her insensibility, for half the night. How trivial I thought her! and how trivial her sex! A man might be an angel or an Apollo, and a mustard-coloured coat would wholly blind them to his merits. I was a prisoner, a slave, a contemned and despicable being, the butt of her sniggering countrymen. I would take the lesson: no proud daughter of my foes should have the chance to mock at me again; none in the future should have the chance to think I had looked at her with admiration. You cannot imagine any one of a more resolute and independent spirit, or whose bosom was more wholly mailed with patriotic arrogance, than I. Before I dropped asleep, I had remembered all the infamies of Britain, and debited them in an overwhelming column to Flora.

The next day, as I sat in my place, I became conscious there was some one standing near; and behold, it was herself! I kept my seat, at first in the confusion of my mind, later on from policy; and she stood and leaned a little over me, as in pity. She was very still and timid; her voice was low.

Did I suffer in my captivity? she asked me. Had I to complain of any hardship?

"Mademoiselle, I have not learned to complain," said I. "I am a soldier of Napoleon."

She sighed. "At least you must regret *La France*," said she, and coloured a little as she pronounced the words, which she did with a pretty strangeness of accent

"What am I to say?" I replied. "If you were carried from this country, for which you seem so wholly suited, where the very rains and winds seem to become you like ornaments, would you regret, do you think? We must surely all regret! the son to his mother, the man to his country; these are native feelings."

"You have a mother?" she asked.

"In heaven, mademoiselle," I answered. "She, and my father also, went by the same road to heaven as so many others of the fair and brave: they followed their queen upon the scaffold. So, you see, I am not so much to be pitied in my prison," I continued: "there are none to wait for me, I am alone in the world. 'Tis a different case, for instance, with yon poor fellow in the cloth cap. His bed is next to mine, and in the night I hear him sobbing to himself. He has a tender character, full of tender and pretty sentiments; and in the dark at night, and sometimes by day when he can get me apart with him, he laments a mother and a sweetheart. Do you know what made him take me for a confidant?"

She parted her lips with a look, but did not speak. The look burned through me with a sudden vital heat.

"Because I had once seen, in marching by, the

belfry of his village!" I continued. "The circumstance is quaint enough. It seems to bind up into one the whole bundle of those human instincts that make life beautiful, and people and places dear—and from which it would seem I am cut off!"

I rested my chin on my knee and looked before me on the ground. I had been talking until then to hold her; but I was now not sorry she should go: an impression is a thing so delicate to produce and so easy to overthrow! Presently she seemed to make an effort.

"I will take this toy," she said, laid a five-and-sixpenny piece in my hand, and was gone ere I could thank her.

I retired to a place apart near the ramparts and behind a gun. The beauty, the expression of her eyes, the tear that had trembled there, the compassion in her voice and a kind of wild elegance that consecrated the freedom of her movements, all combined to enslave my imagination and inflame my heart. What had she said? Nothing to signify; but her eyes had met mine, and the fire they had kindled burned inextinguishably in my veins. I loved her; and I did not fear to hope. Twice I had spoken with her; and in both interviews I had been well inspired, I had engaged her sympathies, I had found words that she must remember, that would ring in her ears at night upon her bed. What mattered if I were half shaved and my clothes a caricature? I was still a man, and I had drawn my image on her memory. I was still a man, and, as I trembled to realise, she was still a woman. Many waters cannot quench love; and love, which is the law of the world,

was on my side. I closed my eyes, and she sprang up on the background of the darkness, more beautiful than in life. "Ah!" thought I, "and you too, my dear, you too must carry away with you a picture, that you are still to behold again and still to embellish. In the darkness of night, in the streets by day, still you are to have my voice and face, whispering, making love for me, encroaching on your shy heart. Shy as your heart is, *it* is lodged there—I am lodged there, let the hours do their office—let time continue to draw me ever in more lively, ever in more insidious colours " And then I had a vision of myself, and burst out laughing.

A likely thing, indeed, that a beggar-man, a private soldier, a prisoner in a yellow travesty, was to awake the interest of this fair girl! I would not despair; but I saw the game must be played fine and close. It must be my policy to hold myself before her always in a pathetic or pleasing attitude; never to alarm or startle her; to keep my own secret locked in my bosom like a story of disgrace, and let hers (if she could be induced to have one) grow at its own rate; to move just so fast, and not by a hair's-breadth any faster, than the inclination of her heart. I was the man, and yet I was passive, tied by the foot in prison. I could not go to her; I must cast a spell upon her at each visit, so that she should return to me; and this was a matter of nice management. I had done it the last time—it seemed impossible she should not come again after our interview; and for the next I had speedily ripened a fresh plan. A prisoner, if he has one great disability for a lover, has yet one considerable advantage:

there is nothing to distract him, and he can spend all his hours ripening his love and preparing its manifestations. I had been then some days upon a piece of carving—no less than the emblem of Scotland, the Lion Rampant. This I proceeded to finish with what skill I was possessed of; and when at last I could do no more to it (and, you may be sure, was already regretting I had done so much), added on the base the following dedication:

À LA BELLE FLORA  
LE PRISONNIER RECONNAISSANT  
A. D. ST. Y. D. K.

I put my heart into the carving of these letters. What was done with so much ardour, it seemed scarce possible that any should behold with indifference; and the initials would at least suggest to her my noble birth. I thought it better to suggest: I felt that mystery was my stock-in-trade; the contrast between my rank and manners, between my speech and my clothing, and the fact that she could only think of me by a combination of letters, must all tend to increase her interest and engage her heart.

This done, there was nothing left for me but to wait and to hope. And there is nothing further from my character: in love and in war, I am all for the forward movement; and these days of waiting made my purgatory. It is a fact that I loved her a great deal better at the end of them, for love comes, like bread, from a perpetual rehandling. And besides,



I was fallen into a panic of fear. How, if she came no more, how was I to continue to endure my empty days? how was I to fall back and find my interest in the major's lessons, the lieutenant's chess, in a two-penny sale in the market, or a halfpenny addition to the prison fare?

Days went by, and weeks; I had not the courage to calculate, and to-day I have not the courage to remember, but at last she was there. At last I saw her approach me in the company of a boy about her own age, and whom I divined at once to be her brother

I rose and bowed in silence.

"This is my brother, Mr. Ronald Gilchrist," said she. "I have told him of your sufferings. He is so sorry for you!"

"It is more than I have the right to ask," I replied; "but among gentlefolk these generous sentiments are natural. If your brother and I were to meet in the field, we should meet like tigers; but when he sees me here disarmed and helpless, he forgets his animosity." (At which, as I had ventured to expect, this beardless champion coloured to the ears for pleasure.) "Ah, my dear young lady," I continued, "there are many of your countrymen languishing in my country, even as I do here. I can but hope there is found some French lady to convey to each of them the priceless consolation of her sympathy. You have given me alms; and more than alms—hope; and while you were absent I was not forgetful. Suffer me to be able to tell myself that I have at least tried to make a return; and for the prisoner's sake deign to accept this trifle."

So saying, I offered her my lion, which she took, looked at in some embarrassment, and then, catching sight of the dedication, broke out with a cry:

"Why, how did you know my name?" she exclaimed.

"When names are so appropriate, they should be easily guessed," said I, bowing. "But indeed there was no magic in the matter. A lady called you by name on the day I found your handkerchief, and I was quick to remark and cherish it."

"It is very, very beautiful," said she, "and I shall be always proud of the inscription.—Come, Ronald, we must be going." She bowed to me as a lady bows to her equal, and passed on (I could have sworn) with a heightened colour.

I was overjoyed: my innocent ruse had succeeded; she had taken my gift without a hint of payment, and she would scarce sleep in peace till she had made it up to me. No greenhorn in matters of the heart, I was besides aware that I had now a resident ambassador at the court of my lady. The lion might be ill chiselled; it was mine. My hands had made and held it; my knife—or, to speak more by the mark, my rusty nail—had traced those letters; and simple as the words were, they would keep repeating to her that I was grateful and that I found her fair. The boy had looked like a gawky, and blushed at a compliment; I could see besides that he regarded me with considerable suspicion; yet he made so manly a figure of a lad, that I could not withhold from him my sympathy. And as for the impulse that had made her bring and introduce him, I could not sufficiently admire it. It seemed to me finer

than wit, and more tender than a caress. It said (plain as language), "I do not and I cannot know you. Here is my brother—you can know him; this is the way to me—follow it."<sup>1</sup>

## GIFTS

FROM "PARABLES FROM NATURE"

BY

MRS. A. S. GATTY

Now there are diversities of gifts.—I. Cor xii 4.

ONE — two — three — four — five, five neatly-raked kitchen-garden beds, four of them side by side, with a pathway between; the fifth a narrow slip, heading the others, and close to the gravel walk, as it was for succession-crops of mustard and cress, which are often wanted in a hurry for breakfast or tea.

Most people have stood by such beds in their own kitchen-gardens on soft spring mornings and evenings, and looked for the coming up of the seeds which either they or the gardener had sown.

Radishes in one, for instance, and of all three sorts—white turnip, red turnip, and long-tailed.

Carrots in another; and this bed had been dug very deep indeed—subsoil digging, as it were; two spades' depth, that the roots might strike freely down.

Onions in another. Beet in the fourth, both the golden and red varieties; while the narrow slip was half mustard and half cress.

Such was the plan here, however; and here, for a

<sup>1</sup> Copyright in the United States by Charles Scribner's Sons.

time, all the seeds lay sleeping, as it seemed. For, as the long smooth-raked beds stretched out dark and bare under the stars, they betrayed no symptoms of anything going on within.

Nevertheless, there was no sleeping in the case. The little seed-grains were fulfilling the law of their being, each after its kind; the grains, all but their inner germs, decaying, the germs, swelling and growing, till they rose out of their cradles, and made their way, through their earthen coverlid, to the light of day.

They did not all come up quite together, of course, nor all quite alike. But as to the time, the gardener had made his arrangements so cleverly that none was very far behind his neighbour. And as to the difference of shape in the first young leaves, what could it signify? It is true the young mustards were round and thick; the cresses oval and pointed; the carrots mere green threads; the onions sharp little blades; while the beet had an odd, staid look. But they all woke up to the same life and enjoyment, and were all greeted with friendly welcome, as they appeared, by the dew, and light, and sunshine, and breezes, so necessary to them all, children of one mother, dependent on the same influences to bring them to perfection.

What *could* put comparisons, and envyings, and heart-burnings into their heads, so filling them either with conceit or melancholy misgivings? As if there was but one way of being right or doing right; as if every creature was *not* good after its kind, but must needs be good after somebody else's kind, or not be good at all!

It must have been some strolling half-informed grub, one would think, who had not yet come to his full senses, who started such foolish ideas.

It began with an inquiry at first, for no actual unkindness was meant.

"I find I get deeper and deeper into the soil every day," remarked the Carrot. "I shall be I don't know how long at last. I have been going down regularly, quite straight, for weeks. Then I am tapering off to a long point at the end, in the most beautiful proportions possible. A traveller told me, the other day, this was perfection, and I believe he was right." (That mischievous vagabond grub, you see!)

"I know what it was to live near the surface in my young days," the Carrot went on; "but never felt solid enjoyment till I struck deeply down, where all is so rich and warm. This is really being firmly established and satisfactory to oneself, though still progressing, I hope, for I don't see why there should be a limit. Pray tell me, neighbours," added he, good-naturedly enough, "how it fares with all the rest of you. I should like to know that your roots are as long, and slim, and orange-coloured as mine; doing as well, in fact, and sinking as far down. I wish us to be all perfect alike. Perfection is the great thing to try for."

"When you are sure you are trying in the right way," sneered a voice from the neighbouring radish bed (the red and white turnip variety were always satirical). "But if the long, slim, orange roots, striking deep into the earth, are your idea of perfection, I advise you to begin life over again. Dear me! I wish you had consulted us before. Why, we stopped

going down long ago, and have been spreading out sideways and all ways, into stout, round solid balls ever since, close white flesh throughout, inside, and not orange, but red without "

"White, he means," shouted another.

"Red, I call it," repeated the first. "But no matter; certainly not orange!"

And "Certainly not orange!" cried they all.

"So," continued the first speaker, "we are quite concerned to hear you ramble on about growing longer and longer, and strongly advise you to keep your own counsel, and not mention it to any one else. We are friends, you know, and can be trusted; but you really must leave off wasting your powers and energy in the dark inside of the ground, out of everybody's sight and knowledge. Come to the surface, and make the most of it, as we do, and then you'll be a credit to your friends. Never mind what travellers say. They've nothing else to do but to walk about and talk, and they tell us we are perfection too. Don't trust to them, but to what we tell you now, and alter your course at once. Roll yourself up into a firm round ball as fast as you can. You won't find it hard if you once begin. You have only to——"

"Let me put in a word first," interrupted one of the long-tailed Radishes in the same bed; "for it is of no use to go out of one extreme into another, which you are on the high road to do if you are disposed to take Mr. Roundhead's advice; who, by the way, ought to be ashamed of forcing his very peculiar views upon his neighbours. Just look at us. We always strike moderately down, so we know it's

the right thing to do, and that solid round balls are the most unnatural and useless things in the world. But, on the other hand, my dear friend, we have to learn where to stop, and a great secret it is, but one I fear you know nothing about at present; so the sooner you make yourself acquainted with it the better. There's a limit to everything but folly—even to striking deep into the soil. And as to the soil being better so very far down, nobody can believe it, for why should it be? The great art is to make the most of what is at hand, as we do. Time enough to go into the depths when you have used up what is much easier got at. The man who gathered some of us yesterday called out, 'These are just right.' So I leave you to judge whether some other people we know of must not be wrong."

"You rather overwhelm me, I own," mused the Carrot; "though it's remarkable you counsellors should not agree among yourselves. Is it possible, however, that I have been making a great mistake all my life? What lost time to look back upon! Yet a ball; no, no, not a ball! I don't think I could grow into a solid round ball were I to try for ever!"

"Not having tried, how can you tell?" whispered the Turnip-Radish persuasively. "But you never will, if you listen to our old-fashioned friend next door, who has been halting between two opinions all his life—will neither make an honest fat lump of it, as I do, nor plunge down and taper with you. But nothing can be done without an effort: certainly no change."

"That is true," murmured the Carrot, rather sadly; "but I am too old for further efforts myself. Mistake or no mistake, my fate is fixed. I am too far down to

get up again, that's certain; but some of the young ones may try. Do you hear, dears? Some of you stop short, if you can, and grow out sideways and all ways, into stout, round, solid balls."

"Oh, nonsense about round balls!" cried the long-tailed Radish in disgust, "what will the world come to if this folly goes on? Listen to me, youngsters, I beg. Go to a moderate depth, and be content; and if you want something to do, throw out a few fibres for amusement. You're firm enough without them, I know, but the employment will pass away time."

"There are strange delusions abroad just now," remarked the Onions to each other, "do you hear all this talk about shape and way of growth? and everybody in the dark on the subject, though they seem to be quite unconscious of the fact themselves. That fellow chattered about solid balls, as if there was no such thing as bulbs, growing layer upon layer, and coat over coat, at all. Of course the very long orange gentleman, with his tapering root, is the most wrong of the whole party; but I doubt if Mr. Roundhead is much wiser when he speaks of close white flesh inside, and red (of all ridiculous nonsense) without. Where are their flaky skins, I should like to know? Who is ever to peel them, I wonder? Poor things! I can't think how they got into such ways! How tough and obstinate they must be! I wish we lived nearer. We would teach them a little better than that and show them what to do."

"I have lived near you long enough," grumbled a deep-red Beet in the next bed; "and you have never taught me; neither shall you, if I can help it. A pretty instructor you would be, who think it ridi-



culous to be red! I suppose you can't grow red yourself, and so abuse the colour out of spite. Now I flatter myself I am red inside as well as out, so I suppose I am more ridiculous than your friend who contrives to keep himself white within, according to his own account; but I doubt the fact. There, there! it is a folly to be angry; so I say no more, except this: get red as fast as you can. You live in the same soil that I do, and ought to be able "

"Oh, don't call it red!" exclaimed a golden Beet, who was of a gentle turn of mind; "it is but a pale tint after all, and surely rather amber than red; and perhaps that was what the long-tailed orange gentleman meant."

"Perhaps it was; for perhaps he calls red orange, as you call it amber," answered the redder Beet; "anyhow, he has rather more sense than our neighbour here, with his layer upon layer, and coat over coat, and flaky skin over all. Think of wasting time in such fiddle-faddle proceedings! Grow a good honest fleshy substance, and have done with it, and let people see you know what life is capable of. I always look at results. It is something to get such a body as I do out of the surrounding soil. That is living to some purpose, I consider. Nobody makes more of their opportunities than I do, I flatter myself, or has more to show for their pains; and a great future must be in store."

"Do you hear them? oh! do you hear them?" whispered the Cress to her neighbour the Mustard (there had been several crops, and this was one of the last); "do you hear how they all talk together of their growth, and their roots, and their bulbs, and

size, and colour, and shape? It makes me quite unhappy, for I am doing nothing like that myself—nothing, nothing, though I live in the same soil! What is to be done? What do *you* do? Do you grow great white solid balls, or long, orange tapering roots, or thick red flesh, or bulbs with layer upon layer, and coat over coat? Some of them talked of just throwing out a few fibres as a mere amusement to pass away time, and this is all I ever do for business. There will never be a great future in store for me. Do speak to me, but whisper what you say, for I shame to be heard or thought of."

"I grow only fibres too," groaned the Mustard in reply, "but I would spread every way and all ways if I could—downwards and upwards, and sideways and all ways, like the rest. I wish I had never been sown. Better never be sown and grown, than sown and grown to such trifling purpose! We are wretched indeed. But there must be injustice somewhere. The soil must give them what it refuses to us."

"Or we are weak and helpless, and cannot take in what it offers," suggested the Cress. "Alas! that we should have been sown only to be useless and unhappy!"

And they wept the evening through. But they alone were not unhappy. The Carrot had become uneasy, and could follow his natural tastes no longer in comfort, for thinking that he ought to be a solid round ball, white inside and red without. The Onion had sore misgivings that the Beet might be right after all, and a good honest mass of red flesh be more worth labouring for than the pale coat-within-coat growth in which he had indulged. It did seem a

waste of trouble, a fiddle-faddle plan of life, he feared. Perhaps he had not gone down far enough in the soil. Some one talked of growing fibres for amusement—he had certainly not come to that; they were necessary to his support; he couldn't hold fast without them. Other people were more independent than he was, then; perhaps wiser—alas!

And yet the Beet himself was not quite easy; for talk as he would, what he had called fiddle-faddle seemed ingenious when he thought it over, and he would like to have persuaded himself that he grew layer upon layer too. But it wouldn't do.

Perhaps, in fact, the bold little Turnip-Radishes alone, from their solid, substantial growth, were the only ones free from misgivings, and believed that everybody ought to do as they did themselves.

What a disturbance there was, to be sure! And it got worse and worse, and they called on the winds and fleeting clouds, the sun, the moon, and stars above their heads, to stay their course awhile, and declare who was right and who was wrong; who was using, who abusing his gifts and powers; who was making most, who least, of the life and opportunities they all enjoyed; whose system was the one the rest must all strive to follow—the one only right.

But they called and asked in vain; till one evening the clouds which had been gathering over the garden for days began to come down in rain, and sank swiftly into the ground, where it had been needed for long. Whereupon there was a general cry, "Here comes a messenger; now we shall hear!" as if they thought no one could have any business in the world but to settle their disputes.

So out came the old inquiries again: who was right—who was wrong—who had got hold of the true secret? But the Cress made no inquiry at all, only shook with fright under the rain; for, thought she, the hour of my shame and degradation is come, poor useless creature that I am, I shall never more hold up my head!

As to the Carrot, into whose well-dug bed the rain found easiest entrance, and sank deepest, he held forth in most eloquent style upon the whole affair: how it was started, and what he had said, how much he had once hoped; how much he now feared.

Now the Raindrops did not care to answer in a hurry; but as they came dropping gently down, they murmured, "Peace, peace, peace!" all over the beds. And truly they seemed to bring peace with them as they fell, so that a calm sank all around, and then the murmur proceeded: "Poor little atoms in a boundless kingdom—each one of you bearing a part towards its fullness of perfection, each one of you endowed with gifts and powers especially your own, each one of you good after its kind—how came these cruel misgivings and heart-burnings among you? Are the tops of the mountains wrong because they cannot grow corn like valleys? Are the valleys wrong because they cannot soar into the skies? Does the brook flow in vain because it cannot spread out like the sea? Is the sea only right because its waters only are salt? Each good after its kind, each bearing a part in the full perfection of the kingdom which is boundless, the plan which is harmony—peace, peace, peace upon all!"

And peace seemed to fall more soothingly than

ever upon the ground as the shower continued to descend.

"How much more, then," resumed the murmur, "among you, to whose inner natures gifts and powers are given, each different from each; each good in its kind; each, if rightly carried out, doing service in that kingdom, which needs for its full perfection that there shall be mountains to rise into the skies, valleys to lie low at their feet, some natures to go deep into the soil, others to rejoice on its surface; some to lie lightly upon the earth, as if scarcely claiming a home, others to grasp at it by wide-spread roots, and stretch out branches to the rivers, all good in their kind, all bearing a part in the glory of that universe whose children are countless as their natures are various—none useless, none in vain.

"Upon one, then, upon all — each wanted, each useful, each good after its kind—peace, peace, peace, peace, peace!" . . .

The murmur subsided to a whisper, the whisper into silence, and by the time the moon-shadows lay upon the garden there was peace everywhere.

Nor was it broken again; for henceforth even the Cress held up her head—she, also, good after her kind.

Only once or twice that year, when the Carrots were gathered, there came up the strangest growths—thick, distorted lumps, that had never struck properly down.

The gardener wondered and was vexed, for he prided himself on the digging of the carrot-bed. "Anything that had had any sense might have gone down into it, he was sure," he said. And he was not far wrong; but you see the Carrot had had no sense

when he began to speculate, and tried to be something he was not intended to be.

Yet the poor clumsy thing was not quite useless after all. For, just as the gardener was about to fling it angrily away, he recollected that the cook might use it for soup, though it could not be served up at table—such a shape as it was' . . .

And this was exactly what she did.

### WAT THE TILER

BEING AN EXTRACT FROM  
"A CHILD'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND"

BY CHARLES DICKENS

I HAVE no need to repeat that the common people of England had long been suffering under great oppression. They were still the mere slaves of the lords of the land on which they lived, and were on most occasions harshly and unjustly treated. But, they had begun by this time to think very seriously of not bearing quite so much; and, probably, were emboldened by that French insurrection I mentioned in the last chapter.

The people of Essex rose against the poll-tax, and being severely handled by the government officers, killed some of them. At this very time one of the tax-collectors, going his rounds from house to house, at Dartford in Kent came to the cottage of one Wat, a tiler by trade, and claimed the tax upon his daughter.

Her mother, who was at home, declared that she was under the age of fourteen; upon that, the collector (as other collectors had already done in different parts of England) behaved in a savage way, and brutally insulted Wat Tyler's daughter. The daughter screamed, the mother screamed. Wat the Tiler, who was at work not far off, ran to the spot, and did what any honest father under such provocation might have done—struck the collector dead at a blow.

Instantly the people of that town uprose as one man. They made Wat Tyler their leader, they joined with the people of Essex, who were in arms under a priest called Jack Straw, they took out of prison another priest named John Ball, and gathering in numbers as they went along, advanced, in a great confused army of poor men, to Blackheath. It is said that they wanted to abolish all property, and to declare all men equal. I do not think this very likely; because they stopped the travellers on the roads and made them swear to be true to King Richard and the people. Nor were they at all disposed to injure those who had done them no harm, merely because they were of high station; for the king's mother, who had to pass through their camp at Blackheath, on her way to her young son, lying for safety in the Tower of London, had merely to kiss a few dirty-faced rough-bearded men who were noisily fond of royalty, and so got away in perfect safety. Next day the whole mass marched on to London Bridge.

There was a drawbridge in the middle, which William Walworth the mayor caused to be raised to prevent their coming into the city; but they soon

terrified the citizens into lowering it again, and spread themselves, with great uproar, over the streets. They broke open the prisons, they burned the papers in Lambeth Palace; they destroyed the Duke of Lancaster's palace, the Savoy, in the Strand, said to be the most beautiful and splendid in England; they set fire to the books and documents in the Temple; and made a great riot. Many of these outrages were committed in drunkenness, since those citizens, who had well-filled cellars, were only too glad to throw them open to save the rest of their property; but even the drunken rioters were very careful to steal nothing. They were so angry with one man, who was seen to take a silver cup at the Savoy Palace, and put it in his breast, that they drowned him in the river, cup and all.

The young king had been taken out to treat with them before they committed these excesses; but he and the people about him were so frightened by the riotous shouts, that they got back to the Tower in the best way they could. This made the insurgents bolder; so they went on rioting away, striking off the heads of those who did not, at a moment's notice, declare for King Richard and the people; and killing as many of the unpopular persons whom they supposed to be their enemies as they could by any means lay hold of. In this manner they passed one very violent day, and then proclamation was made that the king would meet them at Mile End, and grant their requests.

The rioters went to Mile End to the number of sixty thousand, and the king met them there, and to the king the rioters peaceably proposed four conditions.



First, that neither they, nor their children, nor any coming after them, should be made slaves any more. Secondly, that the rent of land should be fixed at a certain price in money, instead of being paid in service. Thirdly, that they should have liberty to buy and sell in all markets and public places, like other free men. Fourthly, that they should be pardoned for past offences. Heaven knows, there was nothing very unreasonable in these proposals! The young king deceitfully pretended to think so, and kept thirty clerks up, all night, writing out a charter accordingly.

Now, Wat Tyler himself wanted more than this. He wanted the entire abolition of the forest laws. He was not at Mile End with the rest, but, while that meeting was being held, broke into the Tower of London and slew the archbishop and the treasurer, for whose heads the people had cried out loudly the day before. He and his men even thrust their swords into the bed of the Princess of Wales while the princess was in it, to make certain that none of their enemies were concealed there.

So Wat and his men still continued armed, and rode about the city. Next morning the king with a small train of some sixty gentlemen—among whom was Walworth the mayor—rode into Smithfield, and saw Wat and his people at a little distance. Says Wat to his men, "There is the king. I will go speak with him, and tell him what we want."

Straightway Wat rode up to him, and began to talk. "King," says Wat, "dost thou see all my men there?"

"Ah," says the king. "Why?"

"Because," says Wat, "they are all at my command, and have sworn to do whatever I bid them."

Some declared afterwards that as Wat said this, he laid his hand on the king's bridle. Others declared that he was seen to play with his own dagger. I think, myself, that he just spoke to the king like a rough, angry man as he was, and did nothing more. At any rate he was expecting no attack, and preparing for no resistance, when Walworth the mayor did the not very valiant deed of drawing a short sword and stabbing him in the throat. He dropped from his horse, and one of the king's people speedily finished him. So fell Wat Tyler. Fawners and flatterers made a mighty triumph of it, and set up a cry which will occasionally find an echo to this day. But Wat was a hard-working man, who had suffered much, and had been foully outraged; and it is probable that he was a man of a much higher nature and a much braver spirit than any of the parasites who exulted then, or have exulted since, over his defeat.

Seeing Wat down, his men immediately bent their bows to avenge his fall. If the young king had not had presence of mind at that dangerous moment, both he and the mayor to boot might have followed Tyler pretty fast. But the king riding up to the crowd, cried out that Tyler was a traitor, and that he would be their leader. They were so taken by surprise, that they set up a great shouting, and followed the boy until he was met at Islington by a large body of soldiers.

## EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE

BEING A PORTION OF AN ESSAY  
FROM "HISTORICAL MEMORIALS OF CANTERBURY"

BY

DEAN STANLEY

A FEW words must first be given to his birth and childhood. He was born on the 15th of June, 1330, at the old Palace of Woodstock, near Oxford, from which he was sometimes called Prince Edward of Woodstock. He was, you will remember, the eldest son of King Edward the Third and Queen Philippa—a point always to be remembered in his history, because, like Alexander the Great and a few other eminent instances, he is one of those men in whom the peculiar qualities both of his father and his mother were equally exemplified. Every one knows the story of the siege of Calais—of the sternness of King Edward and the gentleness of Queen Philippa—and it is the union of these qualities in their son which gave him the exact place which he occupies in the succession of our English princes and in the history of Europe.

We always like to know where a famous man was educated. And here we know the place, and also see the reason why it was chosen. Any of you who have been at Oxford will remember the long line of buildings which overlook the beautiful curve of High Street, the buildings of "Queen's College," the college of the queen. At the time of which I speak

that college was the greatest — two others only existed in Oxford. It had but just been founded by the chaplain of Queen Philippa, and took its name from her. There it was that, according to tradition, the Prince of Wales, her son, as in the next generation Henry the Fifth, was brought up. If we look at the events which followed, he could hardly have been twelve years old when he went. But there were then no schools in England, and their place was almost entirely supplied by the universities. Queen's College is much altered in every way since the little prince went there, but they still keep an engraving of the vaulted room which he is said to have occupied; and though most of the old customs which prevailed in the college, and which made it a very peculiar place even then, have long since disappeared, some of which are mentioned by the founder, and which, therefore, must have been in use when the prince was there, still continue.

You may still hear the students summoned to dinner, as he was, by the sound of a trumpet, and in the hall you may still see, as he saw, the Fellows sitting all on one side of the table, with the Head of the college in the centre, in imitation of the "Last Supper," as it is commonly represented in pictures. The very names of the Head and the twelve Fellows (the number first appointed by the founder, in likeness of our Lord and the Apostles) who were presiding over the college when the prince was there are known to us.

He must have seen what has long since vanished away—the thirteen beggars, deaf, dumb, maimed, or blind, daily brought into the hall to receive their

dole of bread, beer, potage, and fish. He must have seen the seventy poor scholars, instituted after the example of the seventy disciples, and learning from their two chaplains to chant the service. He must have heard the mill within or hard by the college walls grinding the Fellows' bread. He must have seen the porter of the college going round the rooms betimes in the morning to shave the beards and wash the heads of the Fellows.

In these and many other curious particulars we can tell exactly what the customs and appearance of the college were when the prince was there. It is more difficult to answer another question which we always wish to know about famous men: Who were his companions? One youth, however, there was at that time in Oxford, and at Queen's College, whom we shall all recognise as an old acquaintance—John Wycliffe, the first English Reformer, and the first translator of the Bible into English.

He was a poor boy, in a threadbare coat, and devoted to study, and the prince probably never exchanged looks or words with him. But it is almost certain that he must have seen him; and it is interesting to remember that once at least in their lives the great soldier of the age had crossed the path of the great Reformer. Each thought and cared little for the other; their characters and pursuits and sympathies were as different as were their stations in life. Let us be thankful if we have learned to understand them both, and see what was good in each, far better than they did themselves.

We now pass to the next events of his life; those

which have really made him almost as famous in war as Wycliffe has been in peace—the two great battles of Crescy and of Poitiers. I will not now go into the origin of the war, of which these two battles formed the turning-points. It is enough for us to remember that it was undertaken by Edward the Third to gain the crown of France, through a pretended claim—for it was no more than a pretended claim—through his mother.

And now, first, for Crescy. I shall not undertake to describe the whole fight, but will call your attention briefly to the questions which every one ought to ask himself if he wishes to understand anything about any battle whatever. First, where was it fought? secondly, why was it fought? thirdly, how was it won? and fourthly, what was the result of it? And to this I must add, in the present instance, what part was taken in it by the prince, whom we left as a little boy at Oxford, but who was now following his father as a young knight in his first great campaign.

The first of these questions involves the second also. If we make out where a battle was fought, this usually tells us why it was fought; and this is one of the many proofs of the use of learning geography together with history. Each helps us to understand the other.

Crescy is a little village between Abbeville and Calais, and not far from the scene of what was, perhaps, a still greater victory—that of Agincourt. Edward had made an incursion into Normandy, and was retreating towards Flanders — or Belgium, as we now call it—when he was overtaken by the

French King Philip, who, with an immense army, had determined to cut him off entirely, and so put an end to the war.

It was Saturday, 28th August, 1346, and it was at four in the afternoon that the battle commenced. It always helps us better to imagine any remarkable event when we know at what time of the day or night it took place; and on this occasion it is of great importance, because it helps us at once to answer the third question we asked: How was the battle won?

It was four in the afternoon, and the French army advanced from the south-east, after a hard day's march, to overtake the retiring enemy. Every one, from the king down to the peasants on the road, crying, "Kill! kill!" were in a state of the greatest excitement, drawing their swords, and thinking that they were sure of their prey. What the French king chiefly relied upon, besides his great numbers, was the troop of fifteen thousand crossbowmen from Genoa, in Italy. These were made to stand in front; when, just as the engagement was about to take place, one of those extraordinary incidents occurred which often turn the fate of battles, as they do of human life in general.

A tremendous storm gathered from the west, and broke in thunder and rain and hail on the field of battle. The sun was darkened, and the horror was increased by the hoarse cries of crows and ravens which fluttered before the storm, and struck terror into the hearts of the Italian bowmen, who were unaccustomed to these northern tempests. And when at last the sky had cleared, and

they prepared their crossbows to shoot, the strings had been so wet by the rain that they could not draw them.

By this time the evening sun streamed out in full splendour over the black clouds of the western sky—right in their faces; and at the same moment the English archers, who had kept their bows in cases during the storm, and so had their strings dry, let fly their arrows so fast and thick that those who were present could only compare it to snow or sleet. Through and through the heads and necks and hands of the Genoese bowmen, the arrows pierced. Unable to stand it, they turned and fled; and from that moment the panic and confusion was so great that the day was lost.

But though the storm and the sun and the archers had their part, we must not forget the prince. He was, we must remember, only sixteen, and yet he commanded the whole English army. It is said that the reason of this was that the King of France had been so bent on destroying the English forces that he had hoisted the sacred banner of France—the great scarlet flag, embroidered with golden lilies, called the *Oriflamme*—as a sign that no quarter would be given, and that when King Edward saw this, and saw the hazard to which he should expose not only the army but the whole kingdom if he were to fall in battle, he determined to leave it to his son. Certain it is that, for whatever reason, he remained on a little hill on the outskirts of the field, and the young prince, who had been knighted a month before, went forward with his companions-in-arms into the very thick of the fray; and when his father



saw that the victory was virtually gained, he forbore to interfere. "Let him *win his spurs*," he said, in words which have since become a proverb, "and *let the day be his*."

The prince was in very great danger at one moment. He was wounded and thrown to the ground, and only saved by one of the knights near him, who carried the great banner of Wales, throwing the banner over the boy as he lay on the ground, and standing upon it till he had driven back the assailants. The assailants were driven back, and far through the long summer evening, and deep into the summer night, the battle raged. It was not till all was dark that the prince and his companions halted from their pursuit, and then huge fires and torches were lit up, that the king might see where they were. And then took place the touching interview between the father and the son, the king embracing the boy in front of the whole army by the red light of the blazing fires, and saying, "Sweet son, God give you good perseverance; you are my true son—right loyally have you acquitted yourself this day, and worthy are you of a crown." And the young prince, after the reverential manner of these times, "bowed to the ground and gave all due honour to the king his father." The next day the king walked over the field of carnage with the prince, and said, "What think you of a battle—is it an agreeable game?"

The general result of the battle was the deliverance of the English army from a most imminent danger, and subsequently the conquest of Calais, which the king immediately besieged and won, and which remained in the possession of the English from that

day till the reign of Queen Mary. From that time the prince became the darling of the English and the terror of the French; and, whether from this terror, or from the black armour which he wore on that day, or from the black banners and the black devices which he used in tournaments, and which contrasted with the fairness of his complexion, he was called by them "Le Prince Noir" (the Black Prince), and from them the name has passed to us; so that all his other sounding titles by which the old poems call him—"Prince of Wales, Duke of Aquitaine"—are lost in the one memorable name which he won for himself in his first fight at Crescy.

And now we pass over ten years, and find him on the field of Poitiers. Again we must ask what brought him there, and why the battle was fought? He was this time alone; his father, though the war had rolled on since the battle of Crescy, was in England. But in other respects the beginning of the fight was very like that of Crescy. Gascony belonged to him by right, and from this he made a descent into the neighbouring provinces, and was on his return home when the King of France—John, the son of Philip—pursued him, as his father had pursued Edward the Third, and overtook him suddenly on the high upland fields which extend for many miles south of the city of Poitiers.

It is the third great battle which has been fought in that neighbourhood—the first was that in which Clovis defeated the Goths, and established the faith in the creed of Athanasius throughout Europe; the second was that in which Charles Martel drove back the Saracens, and saved Europe from Moham-

medanism; the third was this, the most brilliant of English victories over the French.

The spot, which is about six miles south of Poitiers, is still known by the name of The Battlefield. Its features are very slightly marked—two ridges of rising ground, parted by a gentle hollow; behind the highest of these two ridges is a large tract of copse and underwood, and leading up to it from the hollow is a somewhat steep lane, there shut in by woods and vines on each side. It was on this ridge that the prince had taken up his position, and it was solely by the good use which he made of this position that the victory was won. The French army was arranged on the other side of the hollow in three great divisions, of which the king's was the hindmost; the farmhouse which marks the spot where this division was posted is visible from the walls of Poitiers.

It was on Monday, 19th September, 1356, at 9 A.M., that the battle began. All the Sunday had been taken up by fruitless endeavours of Cardinal Talleyrand—a namesake of the famous minister of Napoleon—to save the bloodshed, by bringing the king and prince to terms—a fact to be noticed for two reasons: first, because it shows the sincere and Christian desire which animated the clergy of those times, in the midst of all their faults, to promote peace and goodwill amongst the savage men with whom they lived; and secondly, because it shows, on this occasion, the confidence of victory which had possessed the French king.

The prince offered to give up all the castles and prisoners he had taken, and to swear not to fight in

France again for seven years. But the king would hear of nothing but his absolute surrender of himself and his army on the spot. The cardinal laboured till the very last moment, and then rode back to Poitiers, having equally offended both parties. The story of the battle, if we remember the position of the armies, is told in a moment. The prince remained firm in his position; the French, filled with their usual chivalrous ardour, charged up the lane. The English archers, whom the prince had stationed behind the hedges on each side, let fly their showers of arrows, as at Crescy: in an instant the lane was choked with the dead, and the first check of such headstrong confidence was fatal.

The prince in his turn charged. A general panic seized the whole French army; the first and second divisions fled in the wildest confusion, the third alone, where King John stood, made a gallant resistance, the king was taken prisoner, and by noon the whole was over. Up to the city gates of Poitiers the French army fled and fell, and you still see the convent in the city, and the ruined abbey near the field, where their dead bodies were buried.

It was a wonderful day. It was eight thousand to sixty thousand. The prince who had gained the battle was still only twenty-six—that is a year younger than Napoleon at the beginning of his campaigns—and the characteristic result of the battle which distinguished it from among all others was the number, not of the slain, but of the prisoners—one Englishman often taking four or five Frenchmen. Perhaps, however, the best known part of the whole is the scene when the king first met the prince in the

evening, which cannot be better described than by old Froissart.

The day of the battle, at night, the prince gave a supper in his lodgings to the French king and to most of the great lords that were prisoners. The prince caused the king and his son to sit at one table, and other lords, knights and squires at the others; and the prince always served the king very humbly, and would not sit at the king's table, although he requested him. He said he was not qualified to sit at the table with so great a prince as the king was. Then he said to the king, "Sir, for God's sake make no bad cheer, though your will was not accomplished this day. For, sir, the king, my father will certainly bestow on you as much honour and friendship as he can, and will agree with you so reasonably that you shall ever after be friends; and, sir, I think you ought to rejoice, though the battle be not as you will, for you have this day gained the high honour of prowess, and have surpassed all others on your side in valour. Sir, I say not this in raillery, for all our party, who saw every man's deeds, agree in this, and give you the palm and chaplet." Therewith the Frenchmen whispered among themselves that the prince had spoken nobly, and that most probably he would prove a great hero, if God preserved his life, to persevere in such good fortune.

## A SHIP BESET

BEING A REVIEW OF A DIARY OF THE SEA<sup>1</sup>

BY

J. J. BELL

"COME," calls the Arctic, "and I will show you great wonders; come, and I will give you of my bounty." And for hundreds of years, desiring knowledge, adventure, or gain, men have answered: "We come!"—recking not of the frosty breath of that pallid mouth, the icy blade hid in that far-flowing white mantle. In February 1866 the *Diana*, of Hull, Captain Gravill commanding, began her northward voyage. Not for discovery, not for honour, did she sail; and we may take it that only the green hands on board looked for romance. All were out to earn a living in the most precarious fashion known to man. All hoped, before the summer was over, to kill many seals up Jan Mayen way and take some big black whales in Baffin's Bay. Well, they killed no seals, and barely escaped destruction in the neighbourhood of that desolate, most forbidding isle; they took only two black whales before the Arctic, wickeder than usual that season, confounded them. But they did discover the Hell that lies below Zero, and

<sup>1</sup> *From the Deep of the Sea.* The Diary of the late Charles Edward Smith, M.R.C.S., Surgeon of the Whaleship *Diana*, of Hull. Edited by his son, Charles Edward Smith Harris, M.B., Ch.B. (A. and C. Black.)

deserved the honours we give to our fellows who simply and greatly endure. I have only sniffed, so to speak, the Arctic from the edge of the Greenland ice, and at the end of August. There had been a light fall of snow, the first threat of winter. A grey mist moved over the white plain, borne on a breeze charged with bitterness from the beyond. A berg, no longer yielding to the sun and lovely dissolution, loomed a ghostly figure of ruin in the dusk. And ever the swell heaving against the brink made the dreariest sound in the world. A very mild experience it was, yet one quickening to the imagination at the time, and to the understanding of a book such as this, read long after in an easy-chair before the fire.

Many tales have been written of those old whaling days in Davis Straits and beyond; but I have read none that has brought the Arctic, in its beauty and blight, so close to me as this unembroidered journal of the fine Quaker gentleman who was surgeon on the *Diana*, more than fifty years ago. The words are still warm, though many were painfully set down in pencil, since the ink had gone solid. They are warm, I think, because of the warm-hearted, God-fearing man who wrote them, sometimes while death screamed aloft and thundered below—yes, and lurked, silent, sullen, within the ship itself; warm, yet they convey a shuddering sense of the horrors of that winter in the Arctic. It was a notably bad season for all ships up there, but the *Diana* had more than her share of ill-luck. If any sweet little cherub was sitting up aloft when she left Hull, he was surely blown away off Jan Mayen, or, at any rate, frozen stiff in Melville Bay, in which sinister place the

*Diana*, after a heavy storm, found herself a solitary ship, with a few days' coal for her paltry 30 h.p. engines, and six or seven hundred miles of ice between her and the open sea.

Impossible! Yet they strove to find a way out. All their hope hung on the wind—and the wind played with their hope and finally broke it. As a last resort Captain Gravill thrust his ship into the ice-pack, so that, if not crushed, she should drift south embedded therein. A six months' journey to the open, and they had provisions for ten weeks! Something to face—was it not?—for those fifty men on a ship beset by perils day and night; the season of long darkness at hand; the cold biting deeper and deeper; all animal and bird life fleeing south from the frigid wrath to come. No occupation was there save weary spells of pumping, or when the cracking of timbers sent them scrambling to the ice with their poor store of gear and goods. For lack of fuel the walls and roofs of the cabins became glazed with ice, and every night was a misery.

The captain, a dear old fellow, full of yarns, had been ailing, and towards Christmas collapsed. Here is a picture of Christmas Eve:

About 2 P.M. there was some heavy pressure upon the ship, and all hands were called to prepare for the worst. On going into the cabin, it was evident the poor old captain had heard the groaning of the timbers . . . a great change had taken place for the worse. The mate told him he must be dressed in readiness for going upon the ice. . . . He kept grasping my hand convulsively, as though wishful for human sympathy in his extremity, whilst the ship was groaning, quaking, and writhing, and the boards of the cabin deck jumping under our feet.



Yet the ship survived. The captain died on the day after Christmas.

Then—scurvy. In the sea-stories of our boyhood the word was familiar; we guessed it meant something rather horrid. The surgeon of the *Diana* realised how devilishly horrid. He did all a man could do for the sufferers, cheering them while fighting down his own despair, for the ship held nothing with which to combat the disease.

It was not fear, though no man was unafraid, that at last broke the courage of that ship's company—or nearly all of it. Bodily weakness and sheer distress of mind brought down one sturdy spirit after another. A time came when the daily prayer-meeting was abandoned. Some of those who had led in the devotions blasphemed openly. Friends hated one another. Men cried in their abject wretchedness, fainted, stumbled, and lay where they fell. To such desperation were they come in the toils of the Arctic. But for Surgeon Smith, who worked (at anything and everything)—and prayed—without ceasing, the mate, and one or two others, the tragedy would have been complete.

The *Diana* was delivered from the ice in March 1867, and these last pages of the journal, which ends with the deliverance, so palpitate with hope and fear as to be truly thrilling. Of the thirteen men who died, several passed within sight of their homes in the Shetlands. This is more than a record of strange and terrible happenings relieved by bright descriptions and glints of humour: it is the un-self-conscious disclosure of a steadfast faith, a noble effort, an unfailing brotherly love—the memorial of a good

man. "We should have perished without him," declared one of the survivors. So I respectfully salute the memory of Charles Edward Smith, and thank his son for having laid open his journal to all.

## CAPTAIN GRAVILL'S CHAT ABOUT WHALES

BEING AN EXTRACT FROM  
"FROM THE DEEPS OF THE SEA"

BY

CHARLES EDWARD SMITH

WE always can tell a likely spot to look for whales by the colour of the water. Whales feed upon small insects which swarm in good whale water in myriads, making the water look quite thick and dark brown. When we see the water have this appearance we keep a good look-out for fish. If there is no food in the water you may be sure you won't see no fish, unless they happen to be passing on their way up or down the country, or are on the search for good feeding ground.

It's my opinion a whale can go a long time without meat, but when they *do* feed they swallow a tremendous quantity. We often take bucketsful of whales' food out of their throats and mouths when cutting out the whalebone.

Whales' food consists of small red insects or animalcules, or whatever you may choose to call them, of a regular, uniform reddish colour, and spindle-shaped, tapering away to the tail. They are found principally in the Arctic and Antarctic

Seas, where they exist in enormous numbers. They don't exceed an inch in length, yet they are the principal food of these great fish.

Whales is sportive and playful enough. You often see them spring clean out of the water, which they does by doubling their tails under their bellies like a bow. It is quite common to see a fish amusing herself by standing on end with her body out of the water as far as her fins, and she threshing the water with her tail and making the seas fly again. In still weather you can hear them several miles off threshing the water. You often see fish rolling themselves over and over on the surface of the water, but whether they do so for an amusement, or because they've been wounded by harpoons or by sharks, or because they are annoyed by their lice, I don't know.

If you kill a whale you are pretty sure to have plenty of sharks swimming about you as you are flinching your fish. They are very bold; don't take the least notice of you, not even if you wound 'em. They scoop great pieces of blubber as big as a plate out of the fish at every bite. They'll soon spoil a fish for you, I assure you. Sometimes you fall in with a dead fish adrift, but what with bears and birds above and sharks below water, they ain't long before the blubber is all away.

I never knew these Greenland sharks to bite a man when in these waters, though their mouths is full of rows of teeth. They are very tenacious of life. We generally try to cut off their heads with a knife. I've seen us cut up a shark into pieces and bury them in the snow. On going to look at them twenty-four hours afterwards the bits were alive and moving about.

I think your book's wrong about sharks attacking whales. I've been fifty years amongst them, and never knew and never heard of their doing such a thing.

I fancy the fish they have put down as a shark that attacks the whales is what we call a "swordfish," though 'tisn't really a swordfish. I never could find a description of this fish or what name they call it in any book on natural history.<sup>1</sup>

They are always ranging and searching about for whales, and swim under a whale and "job" this sword into its belly. They go about in schools, old ones and young ones together, as old-fashioned as can be, ranging every bight and crack in the ice in search of whales.

One year when we was to the southward of Pond's Bay we saw several whales up a crack in the ice. A school of these swordfish came ranging along the floe edge, but stopped directly they got to the crack, as if they knew the fish was there. The old ones went up the crack, whilst the young ones lay to and dodged outside.

I sent off the men across the ice with guns to put a ball into 'em, for, says I, "Confound them ugly things! they'll frighten every fish out of the crack." And so they did, but we got one of the whales that same day away down to leeward of where these swordfish was.

<sup>1</sup> Probably Captain Gravill referred to the grampus (*Orca gladiator*). This is described as a marine cetaceous mammal, about twenty-five feet in length. It is carnivorous and remarkably voracious, attacking whales with great determination.

If we see swordfish about we never think of looking for whales, for if any have been in that neighbourhood them swordfish are sure to drive them away. Whales is frightened to death of them. My son John, when he had this ship, saw a lot of swordfish a good way to the eastward of Cape Farewell. When he come to take notice, he found they had surrounded a whale and had nearly tormented her to death. She was very far spent, nearly done for. He told me if he'd had his boats and lines ready he could have got her easy enough.

When I had the *Chase* I saw a number of fish one Sunday off Agnes's Monument. They kept on the top of the water nearly all the time. One fish lay for three and three-quarter hours like a stone—may have been asleep for aught I know.

If I was full I would not kill a fish for the sake of her whalebone unless there was another ship in sight to take her blubber, though it would be a great temptation to kill her for the sake of the owners now that whalebone is such a price.

I believe the whalebone is mostly made up into ostrich feathers. You don't see one umbrella in a hundred that has bone ribs nowadays. There's one particular family in France that buys up the bone to make ostrich feathers.

When I was in St. Johns in the *Polynia*, and was in a shop buying trinkets to barter with the Yaks, a lady came into the shop and bought an ostrich feather. Says I to the man, "Isn't that feather made of whalebone?" He stared at me and confessed that it was, and was going to show me a real ostrich feather. "No occasion," says I; "I've seen plenty

of 'em. Fetched lots of 'em home from Cape Colony when I was there."

A real ostrich feather is a very expensive affair, I can tell you, but these whalebone ones are cheap and looks just like the real feather. Put whalebone into water and heat it, and you can make it into any shape or any thing you like.<sup>1</sup>

## KING ALFRED AND THE DANES

BEING AN EXTRACT FROM  
"OLD ENGLISH HISTORY FOR CHILDREN"

BY

EDWARD AUGUSTUS FREEMAN

AND now we come to the terrible year 878, the greatest and saddest and most glorious in all Alfred's life. In the very beginning of the year, just after Twelfth-night, the Danish host again came suddenly—"bestole" as the *Chronicle* says—to Chippenham. Then "they rode through the West Saxons' land, and there sat down, and mickle of the folk over sea they drove, and of the others the most deal they rode over; all but the King Alfred; he with a little band hardly fared [went] after the woods and on the moor-fastnesses." How can I tell you this better than in the words of the *Chronicle* itself, only altering some words into their modern shape, that you may the better understand them? One hardly sees how it was that the country could be all at once so utterly overrun, especially as there is no mention made of

<sup>1</sup> Copyright in the United States by the Macmillan Co., New York.

any battle. There is indeed one account which says that Alfred did not reign so well at the beginning as he did afterwards, but that he did badly in many things and oppressed his people, so that they would not fight for him; but that he was rebuked by his cousin the hermit Saint Neot, and that after that he ruled well. But I do not at all believe this, because there is no good authority for it,<sup>1</sup> and it does not agree in the least with what went before and what goes after. It is more likely of the two, as some think, that the part of Alfred's dominions where the people were still of Welsh descent gave him some trouble, and that they did not join heartily with his own West Saxons. But I do not see any very clear proof even of this, and anyhow it is quite certain that this time of utter distress lasted only a very little while, for in a few months Alfred was again at the head of an army and able to fight against the Danes. It must have been at this time that the story of the cakes, which I dare say you have heard, happened, if it ever happened at all. The tale is quite possible, but there is no proof of it being true. It is said that Alfred went and stayed in the hut of a neatherd or swineherd of his, who knew who he was, though his wife did not know him. One day the woman set some cakes to bake, and bade the king, who was sitting by the fire mending his bow and arrows, to tend them. Alfred thought more of

<sup>1</sup> The story has got into some copies of Asser's *Life* from the book called Asser's *Annals*, which is undoubtedly a forgery. Most likely it comes from some life of Saint Neot, the author of which was anxious to exalt the saint, and did not mind how unfair he was to the king.

his bow and arrows than he did of the cakes, and let them burn. Then the woman ran in and cried out,

"There, don't you see the cakes on fire? Then wherefore turn them not?

You're glad enough to eat them when they are piping hot!"

It is almost more strange when we are told by some that this swineherd or neatherd<sup>1</sup> afterwards became Bishop of Winchester. They say that his name was Denewulf, and that the king saw that, though he was in so lowly a rank, he was naturally a very wise man. So he had him taught, and at last gave him the bishopric. But it is hard to believe this, especially as Denewulf, Bishop of Winchester, became bishop the very next year.

We will go on with things that are more certain. I do not think that I can do better than tell you the story as it is in the *Chronicle*, only changing those forms of words which you might not understand.

And that ilk [same]<sup>2</sup> winter was Iwer's and Healfdene's brother among the West Saxons in Devonshire: and him there men slew and eight hundred men with him and forty men of his host. And there was the banner<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The story that Alfred took shelter in a herdsman's cottage is one story, and the story that Bishop Denewulf had been a swineherd is another story. But people have very naturally put the two stories together and have thought that Denewulf was the same man in whose hut the cake story happened. But no old writer distinctly says so, and indeed the two stories come from different writers.

<sup>2</sup> That word is still used in Scotland.

<sup>3</sup> *Guðfana*, from *guð* (guth), which means *batle*, and *fana* (like the German or High-Dutch *fahne*), a *banner*. It is the same word as *gonfanon* or *gonfalon*, whence *gonfalonier*, the title of a magistrate at Florence long after.



taken which they the Raven hight [call]. And after this Easter wrought King Alfred with his little band a work [fortress] at Athelney,<sup>1</sup> and out of that work was he striving with the [Danish] host, and (with him) that deal [part] of the Sumorsætas that nighest was. And on the seventh week after Easter he rode to *Ecgbrihtesstan*,<sup>2</sup> by the east of Selwood; and there to meet him came the Sumorsætas all and the Wilsætas and of Hamptonshire the deal [part] that on this side the sea was;<sup>3</sup> and they were fain [glad] to see him. And he fared [went] one night from the wick [dwelling or camp] to Æglea, and after that one night to Ethandun, and there fought with all the host and put them to flight, and rode after them to their work [fortress] and there sat fourteen nights. And the army sold [gave] him hostages and mickle oaths, and eke they promised him that their king should receive baptism.<sup>4</sup> And this they fulfilled. And three weeks after came the king Guthrum with thirty of the men that in the host were worthiest, at Aller, that is near Athelney. And him the king received at his baptism,<sup>5</sup> and his chrisomloosing<sup>6</sup> was at Wedmore. And he was twelve nights with the king, and he honoured him and his feres [companions] with mickle fee [money].

<sup>1</sup> *Æthelingas*, the isle of the Æthelings or princes.

<sup>2</sup> *Ecgeberht's stone*, that is *Brixton Deverell* in Wiltshire. You see how the name has been cut short.

<sup>3</sup> That is, those who had not fled beyond sea for fear of the Danes.

<sup>4</sup> In Old English *fullwiht* or *fulluht*, from *fullian*, to wash or make clean like a *fuller*. So *baptise* is from the Greek *βάπτειν* or *βαπτίζειν*, to dip, and in High Dutch to baptise is *taufen*, which word you will see, if you change the letters rightly, is the same as our *dip*.

<sup>5</sup> That is, was his godfather.

<sup>6</sup> That is, he laid aside the chrisom or white garment (from Greek *χρίσμα*, to anoint, whence the name of *Christ*) which a newly-baptised person wore for a certain time.

Thus you see how soon King Alfred's good luck came back to him again. And I do not doubt that you are the more pleased to hear the tale, because all this happened not very far from our own home. It was in the woods and marshes of Somersetshire that Alfred took shelter, and the Sumorsætas were among the first who came to his help after Easter. But we will take things a little in order. You see the first fighting was in Devonshire, where the Raven was taken. This was a famous banner of the Danes, said to have been worked by the daughters of Ragnar Lodbrog. It was thought to have wonderful powers, so that they could tell by the way in which the raven held his wings whether they would win or not in battle. Æthelweard tells us that the Danes besieged Odda the Alderman of Devonshire, and adds that, though their king was killed, still the Danes kept the battle-place. You see the time of utter distress lasted only from soon after Twelfth-night to Easter, and even during that time the taking of the Raven must have cheered the English a good deal. After Easter things began to mend, when Alfred built his fort at Athelney and began to skirmish with the Danes, and seven weeks later came the great victory of Ethandun, which delivered Wessex. You must remember that, at this time, all the low country of Somersetshire, Sedgmoor and the other moors, as we call them now, was covered with water, or was at least quite marshy, so that any ground a little higher than the rest was really an island. You know how to this day very few people live quite down on the moors, but the towns and villages, and even most of the separate houses, are all built either

on such islands, or else on the slopes of the larger hills, as the villages between Wells and Axbridge cling, as it were, to the side of Mendip. Such islands were often chosen, as I think I told you before, for building monasteries, and they were often useful in time of war, when men could take shelter in such an island, where it was hard for their enemies to get at them. Thus you will find that, in later times, the Isle of Ely and other such places served as a shelter to the English who were fighting against the Normans,<sup>1</sup> and so it was when King Alfred made his fort at Athelney. Then, when he thought he was strong enough, he left the low ground and went up the hills, and gathered his men together at Ecg-brihtesstan or Brixton, which is in Wiltshire, near Warminster. Then he marched, still north-east, to Ethandun, that is Edington, not far from Trowbridge and Westbury, where he fought the great battle. At Edington there is a very fine church, but that was not built till many hundred years after Alfred's time, namely in the reign of Edward the Third. Some say that the white horse which is cut in the side of the chalk hills near there was cut then, that men might remember the great battle of Ethandun. But it has been altered in modern times to make it look more like a real horse. There is another figure of a white horse near Shrivenham, which has not been altered at all, but is very old and rude, so that you might hardly know that it was meant for a horse at all. Whether either of them has really anything to do with King Alfred I do not pretend to say. Perhaps

<sup>1</sup> And later still, with the followers of Earl Simon of Montfort after his death.

the one near Shrivenham may be a great deal older than Alfred's time, as it is very like the figures of horses on some of the old British coins.

But all this time Alfred seems to have kept his headquarters at Athelney, for it was at Aller close to Athelney that Guthorm came to be baptised. Thence they went to Wedmore, because there the West Saxon kings had a palace. There the Wise Men came together, and Alfred and Guthorm (or, to give him the name by which he was baptised, Æthelstan) made a treaty. Guthorm-Æthelstan was to leave Wessex, but he was to keep East Anglia, which he had already, and the north-eastern part of Mercia. The boundary ran along the Thames to the mouth of the Lea, then by Bedford and the river Ouse to the old Roman road called Watling Street. The south-western part of Mercia was to remain to Alfred. That is to say, speaking roughly, Alfred recovered that part of Mercia which had been originally West Saxon and which was only conquered by the Angles in the seventh and eighth centuries. But you see that the Danes now got much the larger part of England, but Alfred contrived to keep London. All Northumberland and East Anglia, most part of Essex, and the larger part of Mercia, thus fell to the Danes. The part of Mercia that Alfred kept he did not altogether join on to Wessex; he did not keep it immediately in his own hands as he did Wessex; West Saxon Mercia, as we may call it, was still governed by its own alderman, who held his own Assembly of Wise Men. But then the alderman of the Mercians was now named by the king of the West Saxons. One Æthelred, who had been alderman of the Hwiccas,

was now made alderman of all the West Saxon part of Mercia, and Alfred gave him in marriage his daughter Æthelflæd, who was called the Lady of the Mercians, and of whom you will hear again.

We shall find that Guthorm-Æthelstan did not always keep the treaty of Wedmore quite so well as he should have done. Still, this treaty was very much better kept than any treaty with the Danes had ever been kept before. In 879 the army went away from Chippenham to Cirencester; that is, they went out of Wessex into Mercia, though not as yet into their own part of Mercia. At Cirencester they "sat" for a year, seemingly by Alfred's leave, as we do not read of any fighting or of any mischief being done. Indeed some accounts say that only those of the Danes stayed who chose to become Christians, and that the rest went away into Gaul under a famous leader of theirs named Hasting. Anyhow, in 880 they went quite away into what was now their own land of East Anglia, and divided it among themselves. Thus Alfred had quite cleared his own kingdom from the Danes, though he was obliged to leave so much of the island in their hands. And even through all these misfortunes, the kingdom of Wessex did in some sort become greater. For there was now no longer a king of the Mercians, but a great part of Mercia was governed by an alderman, who was not only the man of the king of the West Saxons, as the latter kings of the Mercians had been, but was appointed by him, and was in fact only a great magistrate acting under his orders. Remember that in 880, when Alfred had done so many great things, he was still only thirty-one years old.

I have now finished what I may call the second Danish War, and there was now peace for several years. Perhaps then this is the best place to bring in one or two stories about Alfred which are worth remembering in one way, whether they are true or false. For it at least shows how much people always remembered and thought of Alfred, that there should be so many more stories told of him than of almost any other of the old kings. The only king of whom anything like so many stories are told is Edgar, and the stories which are told of Edgar are by no means so much to his credit as the stories which are told of Alfred.

One story is that Alfred, wishing to know what the Danes were about and how strong they were, set out one day from Athelney in the disguise of a minstrel or juggler, and went into the Danish camp, and stayed there several days, amusing the Danes with his playing, till he had seen all that he wanted, and then went back without anyone finding him out. Now there is nothing actually impossible in this story, but we do not find it in any writer earlier than William of Malmesbury, who lived in the twelfth century. And it is the sort of story which one finds turning up in different forms in different ages and countries. For instance, exactly the same story is told of a Danish king Anlaf, of whom you will hear presently. So it is one of those things which you cannot at all believe for certain.

## THE LITTLE OLD LADY

BEING A PORTION OF THE FIRST CHAPTER OF  
"MRS. OVERTHEWAY'S REMEMBRANCES"

BY

MRS. J. H. EWING

THE little old lady lived over the way, through a green gate that shut with a click, and up three white steps. Every morning at eight o'clock the church bell chimed for Morning Prayer—chim! chime! chim! chime!—and every morning at eight o'clock the little old lady came down the white steps, and opened the gate with a click, and went where the bells were calling.

About this time also little Ida would kneel on a chair at her nursery window in the opposite house to watch the old lady come out and go. The old lady was one of those people who look always the same. Every morning her cheeks looked like faded rose-leaves, and her white hair like a snow wreath in a garden laughing at the last tea-rose. Every morning she wore the same black satin bonnet, and the same white shawl; had delicate gloves on the smallest of hands, and gathered her skirt daintily up from the smallest of feet. Every morning she carried a clean pocket-handkerchief, and a fresh rose in the same hand with her Prayer-book; and as the Prayer-book being bound up with the Bible was thick as well as handsome, she seemed to have some difficulty in so doing. Every morning, whatever the weather might

be, she stood outside the green gate, and looked up at the sky to see if this were clear, and down at the ground to see if that were dry; and so went where the bells were calling.

Ida knew the little old lady quite well by sight, but she did not know her name. Perhaps Ida's great-uncle knew it; but he was a grave, unsociable man who saw very little of his                      so perhaps he did not; and Ida stood too much in awe of him to trouble him with idle questions. She had once asked Nurse, but Nurse did not know; so the quiet orphan child asked no more. She made up a name for the little old lady herself, however, after the manner of Mr. John Bunyan, and called her Mrs. Overtheway; and morning after morning, though the bread-and-milk breakfast smoked upon the table, she would linger at the window, beseeching—

"One minute more, dear Nurse! Please let me wait till Mrs. Overtheway has gone to church."

And when the little old lady had come out and gone, Ida would creep from her perch and begin her breakfast. Then, if the chimes went on till half the basinful was eaten, little Ida would nod her head contentedly, and whisper:

"Mrs. Overtheway was in time."

Little Ida's history was a sad one. Her troubles began when she was but a year old, with the greatest of earthly losses—for then her mother died, leaving a sailor husband and their infant child. The sea-captain could face danger, but not an empty home; so he went back to the winds and the waves, leaving his little daughter with relations. Six long years had he been away, and Ida had had many homes, and yet,



somehow, no home, when one day the postman brought her a large letter, with her own name written upon it in a large hand. This was no old envelope sealed up again—no make-believe epistle to be put into the post through the nursery door; it was a real letter, with a real seal, real stamps, and a great many postmarks; and when Ida opened it there were two sheets written by the Captain's very own hand, in round fat characters, easy to read, with a sketch of the Captain's very own ship at the top, and, most welcome above all, the news that the Captain's very own self was coming home.

"I shall have a papa all to myself very soon, Nurse," said Ida. "He has written a letter to me, and made me a picture of his ship; it is the *Bonne Esperance*, which he says means Good Hope. I love this letter better than anything he has ever sent me."

Nevertheless, Ida took out the carved fans and workboxes, the beads, and handkerchiefs, and feathers, the dainty foreign treasures the sailor-father had sent to her from time to time; dusted them, kissed them, and told them that the Captain was coming home. But the letter she wore in her pocket by day, and kept under her pillow by night.

"Why don't you put your letter into one of your boxes, like a tidy young lady, Miss Ida?" said Nurse. "You'll wear it all to bits doing as you do."

"It will last till the ship comes home," said Miss Ida.

It had need then to have been written on the rock, graven with an iron pen for ever, for the *Bonne Esperance* (like other earthly hopes) had perished to return no more. She foundered on her homeward voyage, and went down into the great waters, whilst

Ida slept through the stormy night, with the Captain's letter beneath her pillow.

Alas! Alas! Alas!

. . . . .

Two or three months had now passed away since Ida became an orphan. She had become accustomed to the crape-hung frock; she had learnt to read the Captain's letter as the memorial of a good hope which it had pleased God to disappoint; she was fairly happy again. It was in the midst of that new desolation in her lonely life that she had come to stay with her great-uncle, and had begun to watch the doings of the little old lady who lived over the way. When dolls seemed vanity, and Noah's Ark a burden, it had been a quiet amusement, demanding no exertion, to see what little she could see of the old lady's life, and to speculate about what she could not; to wonder and fancy what Mrs. Overtheway looked like without her bonnet, and what she did with herself when she was not at church. Ida's imagination did not carry her far. She believed her friend to be old, immeasurably old, indefinitely old; and had a secret faith that she had never been otherwise. She felt sure that she wore a cap indoors, and that it was a nicer one than Nurse's; that she had real tea, with sugar and cream, instead of milk and water, and hot toast rather than bread and treacle for tea; that she helped herself at meals, and went to bed according to her own pleasure and convenience; was—perhaps on these very grounds—utterly happy, and had always been so.

"I am only a little girl," said Ida, as she pressed

her face sadly to the cold window-pane. "I am only a little girl and very sad, you know, because papa was drowned at sea; but Mrs. Overtheway is very old, and always happy, and so I love her."

And in this there was both philosophy and truth.

It is a mistake to suppose that the happiness of others is always a distasteful sight to the sad at heart. There are times in which life seems shorn of interest and bereaved of pleasure, when it is a relief, almost amounting to consolation, to believe that any one is happy. It is some feeling of this nature, perhaps, which makes the young so attractive to the old. It soothes like the sound of harmonious music, the sight of harmonious beauty. It is a witness to the conviction which lies deep even in the most afflicted soul that (come what may) all things were created good, and man made to be blessed, before which sorrow and sighing flee away.

It was this in part which formed the attraction for Ida in the little old lady who lived over the way. That green gate shut in a life of which the child knew nothing, and which consequently seemed one of mysterious delight; to believe that such things could be was consoling, and to imagine them was real entertainment. Ida would sometimes draw a chair quietly to the table beside her own, and fancy that Mrs. Overtheway was having tea with her. She would ask the old lady if she had been in time for church that morning, beg her to take off her bonnet, and apologise politely for the want of hot tea and toast. So far all was well, for Ida could answer any of these remarks on Mrs. Overtheway's behalf; but it may be believed that after a certain point this

one-sided conversation flagged. One day Nurse overheard Ida's low murmurs.

"What are you talking about, Miss Ida?" said she.

"I am pretending to have Mrs. Overtheway to tea," said Ida.

"Little girls shouldn't pretend what's not true," replied Nurse, in whose philosophy fancy and falsehood were not distinguished. "Play with your dolls, my dear, and don't move the chairs out of their places."

With which Nurse carried off the chair into a corner as if it had been a naughty child, and Ida gave up her day-dream with a sigh; since to have prolonged the fancy that Mrs. Overtheway was present, she must have imagined her borne off at the crisis of the meal after a fashion not altogether consistent with an old lady's dignity.

Summer passed, and winter came on. There were days when the white steps looked whiter than usual; when the snowdrift came halfway up the little green gate, and the snow-flakes came softly down with a persistency which threatened to bury the whole town. Ida knew that on such days Mrs. Overtheway could not go out; but whenever it was tolerably fine the old lady appeared as usual, came daintily down the steps and went where the bells were calling. Chim! chime! chim! chime! They sounded so near through the frosty air, that Ida could almost have fancied that the church was coming round through the snowy streets to pick up the congregation.

Mrs. Overtheway looked much the same in winter as in summer. She seemed as fresh and lively as ever, carried her Prayer-book and handkerchief in the same

hand, was only more warmly wrapped up, and wore fur-lined boots which were charming. There was one change, however, which went to Ida's heart. The little old lady had no longer a flower to take to church with her. At Christmas she took a sprig of holly, and after that a spray of myrtle, but Ida felt that these were poor substitutes for a rose. She knew that Mrs. Overthway had flowers somewhere, it is true, for certain pots of forced hyacinths had passed through the little green gate to the Christmas church decorations; but one's winter garden is too precious to be cropped as recklessly as summer rose-bushes, and the old lady went flowerless to church and enjoyed her bulbs at home. But the change went to Ida's heart.

Spring was early that year. At the beginning of February there was a good deal of snow on the ground, it is true, but the air became milder and milder, and towards the end of the month there came a real spring day, and all the snow was gone.

"You may go and play in the garden, Miss Ida," said Nurse, and Ida went.

She had been kept indoors for a long time by the weather and by a cold, and it was very pleasant to get out again, even when the only amusement was to run up and down the shingly walks and wonder how soon she might begin to garden, and whether the gardener could be induced to give her a piece of ground sufficiently extensive to grow a crop of mustard and cress in the form of a capital I. It was the kitchen-garden into which Ida had been sent. At the far end it was cut off from the world by an overgrown hedge with large gaps at the bottom, through which Ida could see the high-road, a trough

for watering horses, and beyond this a wood. The hedge was very thin in February, and Ida had a good view in consequence, and sitting on a stump in the sunshine she peered through the gap to see if any horses came to drink. It was as good as a peep-show, and indeed much better.

"The snow has melted," gurgled the water, "here I am." It was everywhere. The sunshine made the rich green mosses look dry, but in reality they were wet, and so was everything else. Slish! slosh! Put your feet where you would the water was everywhere. It filled the stone trough, which, being old, and grey, and steady, kept it still, and bade it reflect the blue sky and the gorgeous mosses, but the trough soon overflowed, and then the water slipped over the side, and ran off in a wayside stream. "Winter is gone!" it spluttered as it ran. "Winter is gone, winter-is-gone, winterisgone!" And, on the principle that a good thing cannot be said too often, it went on with this all through the summer, till the next winter came and stopped its mouth with icicles. As the stream chattered, so the birds in the wood sang—Tweet! tweet! chirrup! throstle! Spring! Spring! Spring!—and they twittered from tree to tree, and shook the bare twigs with melody; whilst a single blackbird, sitting still upon a bough below, sang "Life!" "Life!" "Life!" with the loudest pipe of his throat, because on such a day it was happiness only to be alive.

It was like a wonderful fairy-tale, to which Ida listened with clasped hands.

ON BOARD THE "ARK-ROYALL"<sup>1</sup>*July 27, 1588*

BEING A CHAPTER FROM "THE EYE-WITNESS"

BY

HILAIRE BELLOC

THE Straits of Dover, when one approaches them from the east, are like the mouth of a great river, nor do they ever bear that aspect more than at sunset, when, if one is in mid-stream and the day has been clear, one sees quite close upon either hand, not ten miles off each way, the highlands of either shore, those highlands branching outwards till they are lost on the horizon as might be lost the spreading highlands of an estuary.

If the stream be at the ebb the illusion is enhanced, for one sees the pouring out of the flood in the way that a river should go; it is then not difficult to forget the North Sea behind one, and to imagine, as one drifts down the mid-channel towards the colour in the west, that one is still embraced by the land, and that one is only just now setting out to sea. The sun broadens into a long belt of haze before it touches the horizon, and the light of it catches either line of cliffs. It seems a very peaceful sea.

<sup>1</sup> The *Ark-Royall* was, during the struggle with the Armada, the flagship of the English Lord Admiral, a landsman, one of the Howards, a family recently grown very powerful through the wealth taken from the Church.

July 27, 1588, was of this kind. The sun was setting beyond the shoals of the Varne and all the great roundel of Spanish ships were clustered in a group from Grisnez eastward, coming up very slowly against the tide; they sailed above an easy holding-ground not far from the French land. The huge bulk of transports, high forward and astern, cast long shadows upon the calm, it was the merest breath of wind that carried the Armada on or, rather, just held it against the strong coastwise stream. When the last of them and the slowest had passed outside the shoals that cluster under the steep of Grisnez the rattling of chains began through the clear and silent air; there were signals both with bugle and with bunting, a gun was fired, and the wide fleet dropped anchor in fifteen fathom and rode, every ship with its bows upstream and every high poop in the blaze of the sunset. It was Saturday evening. All week long they had crawled and beaten up the Channel, and all week long the little English craft with their much heavier artillery had stood the recoil of their own great guns and had peppered the enemy from well out of range; and one ship the Spaniards had lost by collision so that she lagged and Drake caught her, full of gold, and another a traitor had fired, and this also, or the charred hulk of it, had been towed into an English harbour.

The Lord Admiral of England all that week had followed in the *Ark-Royall*. He had followed them by day and by night; all the hours a man can see to fire he ordered the intermittent cannonade, and now upon this calm evening, with the northerly breeze gone westward and dying down, he and his



came up between the Spaniards and the sun. They also cast anchor just out of range, and from beyond the Straits from round the North Foreland came thirty more from London and joined the line.

It was soon dark. Long before midnight the craft began to swing, the smaller English vessels coming quickly round to the bubbling of the flood tide as it swirled round Grisnez, the larger Spanish transports catching the stream more slowly, but at last turned also east and west to the change of the sea, and with the turn of the tide the wind rose, though at first but little, and blew steadily out of the west and south in a gentle and constant manner, and the sky clouded. The beacon upon Dover cliff flickered far off to the west and the northward; one could see bonfires or the glare of them against the sky of the Weald, and there were more lights than usual passing up and down the English shore. Upon the French, the tall Pharos of Calais alone shone over the marshy flats. Grisnez was a huge lump against the darkness. But all the surface of the sea was dotted with the lamps of the fleets and the broken water was full of glints and reflections.

In Dunkirk, a very few miles up the shore, waited that army which, if in any manner it could have crossed the day's march of salt water, would have raised the Catholic north of England, occupied the indifferent south, and held London—to the complete reversal of the fate of Europe. Further still up coast, at Nieuport, was their reserve. It was midnight and past midnight; the Sunday morning had begun, and the wind, chopping a little northward and uncertain, but in general a little south of west, blew in gusts

that soon joined to half a gale. The sea rose, and along the line of the sand and under the dark steep beyond, the long white line of breakers was very clear through the darkness.

Aboard the *Ark-Royall* the Lord Admiral Howard, the landsman, took counsel and did as he was told. They took eight ships of the worst, cleared them and stuffed them with all manner of burnable and missile things, they put in barrels of pitch and of powder, great stones and round shot, beams of dry wood and slack cordage. They warped them round in the difficulty and tossing of that weather till they pointed up stream, and they set square sails on each that the wind should catch them, so that with the gale and the flood tide together they might bear down upon the Spanish Fleet. These derelicts were held by warps from the stern, and the sails so set strained the warps too powerfully until the signal was given. Then, with great despatch, the last men left aboard touched fire to matches in twenty places upon one or the other, and tumbled over the side. The strands that held them were cut, and as the first flames leapt from their decks they careered before the wind against the Armada. It was about two o'clock in the morning.

From the *Ark-Royall*, at the head of the English line, was a sight not seen again in history. The conflagration burnt up enormous, clear and high, blazing first from the sterns of the fireships and showing the square sails brilliant red against the night. The gale blew the flames before it in broad sheets, and one could hear the roaring of them even against the wind. Down weather that floating town

of Spanish galleys shone out as the dreadful light came near; the tumbling and foaming sea in a circle all around was conspicuous in the strong glare, and the shape of every wave was marked clearly for a cable's length around.

The Armada awoke. Among the thousands who crowded the decks, impeding the haste of the sailors as they ran to let the anchors go, were many who remembered that same awful sight upon the Scheldt three years before, when the fireships had driven against Parma's boom. There was no time for the slow work of the capstans; men took axes and hacked at the cables forward; the canvas was run up as might be in such a medley, and the monstrous bulks paid round in very varied manner, confused and hampering one another as their headsails, with the sheets hard a-weather, caught the gale. Not a few, on whom too much had been set or too hastily, careened a moment dangerously to leeward, then recovered; there were shouts everywhere and a babel of orders; men running with fenders to hang over the sides, as one big wall of wood or another surged up too near in the darkness; at last all were turned and free, and the herd of them went driving before the south-west wind along that perilous shore. The men on the *Ark-Royall* and the Lord Admiral, watching from the height of the rail, cursed to see no fireship get home. The set of the seas and the slant of the wind drove one after another upon the flat stretches of the beach, and there they burnt out, bumping higher and higher as the tide rose along the flats, and to their burning was added dull explosions as the fire reached their powder. But the Spanish fleet was gone.

The *Ark-Royall* also weighed anchor and all her sisters with her to take up that long chase again. It seemed that the attempt had failed—but with the weather that was to be and the port of embarkation passed, the invasion could never come; this island had been certainly saved before the stormy morning broke beyond the marshes of the lowlands.

. . . . .

There was lightning all over heaven before it was day, and the raging water was a little tamed by cataracts of rain. The light grew dully through the furious weather, the Spanish line was scattered twenty miles thwart of the Flanders shore, their leading ships could see the opening of Ostend, their laggards were still far west of Nieuport and near their panic of the night. Off Gravelines the long-range artillery of the English caught them. In spite of the gale each fleet rallied to the sound of the cannon, and all that Sunday long the guns answered each other without a pause, but the English had the range and the weather, and the gigantic Spanish fabrics, leaning away from the blast, shot short or high, while the English broadsides, leaning downward and toward the mark, poured in an accurate fire, those smaller vessels also turned well and quickly even in such a sea, making of themselves a changing target, but having fixed targets before them in the lumbering masses of their opponents. The success of their gunnery lent them hardihood, and the more daring would sweep quite close to the Spanish sides and sheer off again; so was Drake's ship chiefly struck. Had he chosen he might have avoided any such

offence, and have done his work at full range and in safety, but he was warm to it, and the dancing manœuvre pleased him. He was hulled forty times, but he swam.

When the night fell this running business had got off the mouth of the Scheldt. The wind backed a little and blew stronger, but no longer toward the land; the great Armada ran northward before it into the midst of a widening sea, and so up and away, and an end to the great concern.

But the men of the *Ark-Royall* (which had commanded all that success) did not know its greatness, and the Lord Admiral, back in port from putting the enemy past the Firth, was fearful of their return, and wrote to Walsingham. "Sir,—Sure bind, sure find. A kingdom is a great wager Sir, you know security is dangerous."

He might have spared his ink; the thing was done.

## THE PRESS-GANG

BEING AN EPISODE FROM "LOST ENDEAVOUR"

BY

JOHN MASEFIELD

ONE Friday, in March 1692, old Carter sent me off to Deptford for his snuff, with the excuse that I looked pale and in need of a walk. "The east wind will do you good, boy," he said. He called me back after I had started. "Boy," he said, "I would send the porter, but the press-gangs are out all along the

river, and if a man enters Deptford he is as good as pressed. They won't touch you, of course, but I'll give you a Protection, in case you should be questioned." He fumbled in his pockets, and at last produced some sealed envelopes, one of which he gave to me. "That is a Protection," he said. "You show that if anybody lays hands upon you. Be back early, because Deptford after dark is no place for a boy." He thrust his hands behind his coat-skirts, and gave the peculiar throaty snort with which he always ended a conversation. I saw him going across the lawn, deep in dreams, with his yellow handkerchief trailing out behind from his pocket. I never saw him again.

I knew that the press was hot along the river; for all through the winter there had been talk of a war with France, to begin as soon as the winter gales were over. The French were going to invade England, to restore that bad king the second James, that was what people said. Why a sensible people should wish to fight for a Stuart was a great puzzle to Dr. Carter; but so it was to be. Now that the weather was getting fair, the Deptford Yards were working day and night, fitting out a squadron with sails and powder and seamen, before the French should begin the war by landing an army in Kent, and marching on London. It was a stirring time in Deptford.

I set out over Black Heath, feeling very proud of my Protection, and half hoping that I might have a chance of showing it. To my regret, it was sealed up. I was tempted to open it, to see what a Protection looked like; for, though they were common enough in those days, and could be obtained from

the lawyers by those entitled to them, I had not then seen one. If I have ever regretted anything in my life, I have regretted that I did not break the seal to examine that Protection.

Deptford was in a great bustle of preparation that windy March afternoon. The creek was full of lighters, loading provision casks for the ships in the river. The yards had double sentries at their gates with bayonets fixed, ready to challenge anyone who tried to enter. A few companies of troops marched in from the camp at Kensington, all the gartered legs swinging out in time to the flute, marching swiftly, followed by the women and children, in half a dozen ordnance waggons. The river was full, almost as far as Greenwich, with a fleet of great ships and the host of victuallers engaged in giving them their stores. The flagship lay off Greenwich with a signal flying, which made me think that the fleet was about to sail. I did not stay long in Deptford after getting the packet of snuff; but with so much happening all about me, in a village so tiny, I could not help noticing things. I knew that my schoolfellows would want to know what I had seen. Having bought a few lollipops at a sweetstuff shop, I started back towards Black Heath, intending to rest at the top of Point Hill, looking down on the bend of the river where the ships were thickest, before going in for supper and preparation. Some naval officers, who had been dining at a tavern in Deptford, stopped me in the road, just by the bridge over the creek, to ask me if I would like to go in a ship with them to see the beautiful foreign countries. I thought at first that they were going to press me. So I said,

"No, thank you, sir. I have a Protection," and out I lugged my precious envelope. They laughed at this, as though it were a good joke. "The young lawyer," they said. "He's got a Protection. Don't have anything to do with him. He'll get you into lawsuits." So they laughed, and let me go, and told me that I should be a man before my mother. They were wild young men, a little the worse for claret. In that far-off age the vice of drinking was common, almost universal. Even gentlemen got drunk. And when gentlemen set an example, who can wonder if they find many imitators?

A minute or two later, just as I was turning up to the hill, Little Theo came out of the barber's shop at the corner and walked over the road to join me.

"Well, Harding," he said, "we will walk home together. You've been buying lollipops, I suppose. I've been buying a new wig."

"Oh, sir," I answered, rather dashed at his daring to come so far into Deptford. "Aren't you afraid of being impressed, sir?"

"Why, no," he answered; "I wear a sword, and know how to use it. Aren't you afraid?"

"No, sir," said I proudly. "I have a Protection."

"Why, then," he said, "a fig for fear. Tell me what you have seen at Deptford."

After that we set off up the steep hill. When we had got to within about a hundred yards of the road to Lewisham, I noticed the figure of a little old woman standing against the wall of a garden, looking up the hill away from me. It was a lonely part of the road at the best of times; and just now, with the press out man-hunting, and the countryside



beset with drunken sailors, robbing and cutting throats, it was even lonelier than usual. I had hardly caught sight of the woman when she turned, saw us coming, and began slowly to walk towards us, leaning on a stout stick, as though she were infirm with age. She was coughing very hard, poor creature. I thought she would break a blood-vessel. When she was within a dozen yards of us, she burst out coughing so violently that she staggered back against a wall. She looked so desperately ill that I ran up to her, to ask if I could help her in any way. She was a little old woman, meanly and dirtily dressed, with dirty grey hairs poking out from under a broken bonnet. Her face was small and wretched-looking, and all flushed with the coughing, which seemed to tear her in pieces.

"Ah!" she gasped, "ah!" (pointing to a small inn along the Lewisham road), "there. Help me." I must say this, that I liked neither the woman's looks nor the thought of helping her to a tavern, from which she most probably had just issued, for she smelt very strongly of gin. However, she was in distress, and the tavern, if not her home, might be her lodging, or the place where her husband was drinking; and in any case, there was Little Theo at my side, so I caught her arm and bade her lean on me.

She leant on me so heavily that I found it difficult to walk with her. She clutched my arm with a force that gave me a great deal of pain. She was coughing hard, but less terribly than when I had spoken. In the intervals of coughing she made some attempt to thank me, with a sly thievish look out of the corners of her eyes, which made me sick of the creature.

"Ah!" she gasped at last; "ah! I'm better. To

the inn, my dear. I'll be all right in the inn. A good boy. Good boy to help a poor old woman. Oh, this cough is very bad. It'll be my death. It's the dust that does it. Grinding the knives for the gentlemen."

At the inn door her coughing broke out again with great violence, till I expected to see her drop dead. She signed to me, in the storm of coughs, to knock at the door, which I did, though with difficulty, for she was clinging to me like a wrestler, and leaning most of her weight upon me. Little Theo, walking up after us, and looking with grave distaste at the woman, also knocked. About a minute after my knock the door was opened by a very evil-looking, dirty woman, with a coarse red face much inflamed by drink. She opened fire upon us at once, with ready abuse. "Why don't yer bring 'er in? Don't yer see she's 'aving a fit or somethink? Don't stand starin' there. 'Ere, come in out of the street, Eliza. 'Elp 'er in, you."

She reached out for Eliza's arm, and fetched the pair of us indoors with a single tug, she must have been as strong as an ox. Little Theo, giving his support to Eliza, entered also. When we were fairly inside, the woman slammed the door to, shutting out the light.

"Wait 'ere in the dark," she said testily, "till I can get the settin'-room door open. I'm not goin' to 'ave the 'all door open to kill us all with the draught. I'll get you a drop o' somethink, Eliza."

After fumbling at a door which I could not see (for the passage was as dark as a tomb), she forced it open, letting in upon us a smell of sawdust, stale tobacco-smoke, and spirits—the filthy smell which

pot-houses of the dirtier kind exude. She had opened the door into a private drinking bar, one of those squalid dens "where sot meets sot in beery beastliness." A drunkard inside somewhere was talking to the pot-boy about a main of cocks, in which one called Jouncer had killed the other.

"Help me in, boy," said Eliza, coughing grievously. "Ah! this cough. It tears me in pieces. 'Elp me in. A drop a gin. Gimme a drop a gin." We helped her into the sitting-room, where she had her "drop a gin," a good big drop. Her cough ceased directly she had swallowed it. She began then to leer at us with sickening, half-drunken ogling.

"Weren't you a kind boy," she said, "to 'elp me 'ere? I dunno as I could a got 'ome without a kind boy to 'elp me. And the kind gentleman, too. Wot a kind gentleman! Much obliged, I'm sure, sir."

By this time we had had more than enough of her. Little Theo said that he thought that she would be all right now that she was at home, and that we would be going. For my part I was eager to be gone. I hated being in such a place, for I had been brought up by my father to look upon a tavern as one of the devil's best recruiting sergeants. We turned out of the sitting-room, and stepped quickly into the darkness of the passage. The publican, a bloated, pasty-faced lout, with something (which looked like a duster) in his left hand, came after us from behind the bar. "I'll just open the door for you," he said.

"It's a tricky door that," said the frowsy woman who had let us in. I caught just a glimpse of her red dress in the light near the sitting-room door. Looking ahead. I saw a blacker mass in the blackness,

as though someone else were in the passage. Then, before I knew what was happening, something came down, dark and stifling, round my head. I heard the woman cry out, "Got 'im, Bill? I got 'is legs." My ankles were clutched together by a cord. I was flung down violently. Something was thrust between my teeth, my arms were pinioned. I heard a vigorous scuffling, thudding noise, which told my confused brain that Mr. Mora was being tackled also; then I was lifted and tossed down again, a hopeless, motionless bundle, on a heap which, by the smell, seemed to be onions.

"There, my little joker," said the voice of the publican, "you'll be as right as ninepence." He laughed with the hard mirthless laughter of the townsman.

"Did 'e get 'is teeth into yer, Bill?" asked Eliza anxiously.

"No fear," said Bill, "I was too quick."

## THE END OF THE HUNT

BEING AN INCIDENT FROM  
"HUNTING CAMPS IN WOOD AND WILDERNESS"

BY

H. HESKETH PRICHARD

ON the 26th of September, with only five days of the season remaining, we set out for the largest of my rights, the chief drawback to which lay in the obligatory three hours' climb before the good elk-ground

could be reached. There was, however, a convenient *sæter* to which we journeyed with some of the feelings of a forlorn hope. We started in company with Geoffrey Gathorne-Hardy, he of the right and left, who had come down the valley the previous evening, bringing with him news of a fine bull killed by his brother.

The sun was high when we came in sight of the *sæter*, a solid log hut roofed over with turf on which grew long grass and flowers that waved in the wind.

After visiting it we climbed over the hill and came out up on the *fjeld* beyond it, here Bismarck took a "*luft*" and led us to the fresh tracks of a cow and a calf, which we saw again later among the trees of a neighbouring right. The dog was pulled off the trail and taken, close hauled, in another direction. We next entered a grove of young birches, which drew blank, but emerging from it Bismarck began to show interest and to sniff the wind that was blowing down the farther cliff. It was most curious to watch him from the instant he lost his indifference. As owing to the unsteady breeze it was impossible to locate the elk immediately, we sat down to give Bismarck time to investigate and to think it out. He settled very quietly on his haunches, the thick white and grey hair on his neck bristling a little, and the muscles of his nose twitching and working. At first the airs were light, but presently followed a stronger gust, at which Bismarck rose and began to lead away resolutely nearly up-wind, under a sky already darkening for storm.

Peder, of course, whispered great expectations in his broken words, and sincerely I hoped that this

time they would be justified by events, though to tell the truth I was doubtful, for the hound's nose was so extraordinarily fine that he had often led us a mile to an elk-trail, and I feared that in the present instance history might once again repeat itself. However, I was happily disappointed, for at the end of half an hour I caught a glimpse of the hindquarters of an elk, the rest of the body being screened from sight by some trees. It was impossible to tell whether it was a bull or no, but while we crept round in hopes of getting a view of the head Bismarck broke into a whine, and the long-sought elk was *skræmi* and making off at full speed through the wood. Peder suppressed Bismarck in a definite though momentary manner with the lunch-bag just as I commenced running to cut off the elk. Some half-way up the hillside I sighted the animals, two of them—a bull and a cow. The cow dashed on, but before the bull could follow her I took as steady an aim as I was capable of after my run and thought I heard the bullet strike. On the shot, as do all but the best elk-hounds, Bismarck broke into a series of excited yaps.

By this time the bull had dashed in among some pine trees, but the cow had run in a circle and now reappeared; she looked at us for a moment and then also decamped up the hill, where in the shadow of the trees I obtained another shot at the bull as he melted away into the dusk of the forest. This shot was fired at a great distance, and I had no reason to think it took effect. On coming up to his tracks, however, we found signs that he had been badly struck, and after following the trail for some little

time I directed Peder to sit down for a rest and light his pipe. He was very jubilant and very sure we should get the bull.

In the course of half an hour we started again, took up the track, and, save for one check by a small river, through which the elk had waded, made good progress, though it was sometimes necessary to move with extreme caution, for the signs all the time showed us to be quite close to the wounded animal.

The elk led us in a complete circle, and for a long distance, so that when dusk was falling we had returned to the hillside upon which the first shot was fired, and at the foot of which lay a lake of some size. Into this the elk had waded; we could see his huge footmarks showing through the still, clear water upon which the evening glow still shone.

The elk had waded out deep into the lake and then begun to swim, so we lost no time in making our way to the nearest point on the opposite shore where he would be likely to land, and commenced to search for his trail. But, as we searched long, we came upon no indication of his having come ashore. Even with Bismarck's help we failed to discover any trace of him, and long after dark we returned, worn out and bitterly disappointed, to the *sæter*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Copyright in the United States by Messrs Sturgis and Walton.

## DANDY

FROM "A TRAVELLER IN LITTLE THINGS"

BY

W. H. HUDSON

HE was of mixed breed, and was supposed to have a strain of Dandy Dinmont blood which gave him his name. A big ungainly animal with a rough shaggy coat of blue-grey hair and white on his neck and clumsy paws. He looked like a Sussex sheep-dog with legs reduced to half their proper length. He was, when I first knew him, getting old and increasingly deaf and dim of sight, otherwise in the best of health and spirits, or at all events very good-tempered.

Until I knew Dandy I had always supposed that the story of Ludlam's dog was pure invention, and I daresay that is the general opinion about it; but Dandy made me reconsider the subject, and eventually I came to believe that Ludlam's dog did exist once upon a time, centuries ago perhaps, and that if he had been the laziest dog in the world Dandy was not far behind him in that respect. It is true he did not lean his head against a wall to bark; he exhibited his laziness in other ways. He barked often, though never at strangers; he welcomed every visitor, even the tax-collector, with tail-wagging and a smile. He spent a good deal of his time in the large kitchen, where he had a sofa to sleep on, and when the two cats of the house wanted an hour's rest they would coil themselves up on Dandy's broad



shaggy side, preferring that bed to cushion or rug. They were like a warm blanket over him, and it was a sort of mutual benefit society. After an hour's sleep Dandy would go out for a short constitutional as far as the neighbouring thoroughfare, where he would blunder against people, wag his tail to everybody, and then come back. He had six or eight or more outings each day, and, owing to doors and gates being closed and to his lazy disposition, he had much trouble in getting out and in. First he would sit down in the hall and bark, bark, bark, until someone would come to open the door for him, whereupon he would slowly waddle down the garden path, and if he found the gate closed he would again sit down and start barking. And the bark, bark would go on until someone came to let him out. But if after he had barked about twenty or thirty times no one came, he would deliberately open the gate himself, which he could do perfectly well, and let himself out. In twenty minutes or so he would be back at the gate and barking for admission once more, and finally, if no one paid any attention, letting himself in.

Dandy always had something to eat at meal-times, but he too liked a snack between meals once or twice a day. The dog-biscuits were kept in an open box on the lower dresser shelf, so that he could get one "whenever he felt so disposed," but he didn't like the trouble this arrangement gave him, so he would sit down and start barking, and as he had a bark which was both deep and loud, after it had been repeated a dozen times at intervals of five seconds, any person who happened to be in or near the kitchen was glad to give him his biscuit for the sake of peace

and quietness. If no one gave it him, he would then take it out himself and eat it.

Now it came to pass that during the last year of the war dog-biscuits, like many other articles of food for man and beast, grew scarce, and were finally not to be had at all. At all events, that was what happened in Dandy's town of Penzance. He missed his biscuits greatly and often reminded us of it by barking; then, lest we should think he was barking about something else, he would go and sniff and paw at the empty box. He perhaps thought it was pure forgetfulness on the part of those of the house who went every morning to do the marketing and had fallen into the habit of returning without any dog-biscuits in the basket. One day during that last winter of scarcity and anxiety I went to the kitchen and found the floor strewn all over with the fragments of Dandy's biscuit-box. Dandy himself had done it; he had dragged the box from its place out into the middle of the floor, and then deliberately set himself to bite and tear it into small pieces and scatter them about. He was caught at it just as he was finishing the job, and the kindly person who surprised him in the act suggested that the reason of his breaking up the box in that way was that he got something of the biscuit flavour by biting the pieces. My own theory was that as the box was there to hold biscuits and now held none, he had come to regard it as useless—as having lost its function, so to speak—also that its presence there was an insult to his ..... a constant temptation to make a fool of himself by visiting it half a dozen times a day only to find it empty as usual. Better,

then, to get rid of it altogether, and no doubt when he did it he put a little temper into the business!

Dandy, from the time I first knew him, was strictly teetotal, but in former and distant days he had been rather fond of his glass. If a person held up a glass of beer before him, I was told, he wagged his tail in joyful anticipation, and a little beer was always given him at meal-time. Then he had an experience, which, after a little hesitation, I have thought it best to relate, as it is perhaps the most curious incident in Dandy's somewhat uneventful life.

One day Dandy, who after the manner of his kind had attached himself to the person who was always willing to take him out for a stroll, followed his friend to a neighbouring public-house, where the said friend had to discuss some business matter with the landlord. They went into the taproom, and Dandy, finding that the business was going to be a rather long affair, settled himself down to have a nap. Now it chanced that a barrel of beer which had just been broached had a leaky tap, and the landlord had set a basin on the floor to catch the waste. Dandy, waking from his nap and hearing the trickling sound, got up, and going to the basin quenched his thirst, after which he resumed his nap. By-and-by he woke again and had a second drink, and altogether he woke and had a drink five or six times; then, the business being concluded, they went out together, but no sooner were they in the fresh air than Dandy began to exhibit signs of inebriation. He swerved from side to side, colliding with the passers-by, and finally fell off the pavement into the swift stream of water which at that point runs in the gutter at

one side of the street. Getting out of the water, he started again, trying to keep close to the wall to save himself from another ducking. People looked curiously at him, and by-and-by they began to ask what the matter was. "Is your dog going to have a fit—or what is it?" they asked. Dandy's friend said he didn't know; something was the matter no doubt, and he would take him home as quickly as possible and see to it.

When they finally got to the house Dandy staggered to his sofa, and succeeded in climbing on to it and, throwing himself on his cushion, went fast asleep, and slept on without a break until the following morning. Then he rose quite refreshed and appeared to have forgotten all about it; but that day when at dinner-time someone said "Dandy" and held up a glass of beer, instead of wagging his tail as usual he dropped it between his legs and turned away in evident disgust. And from that time onward he would never touch it with his tongue, and it was plain that when they tried to tempt him, setting beer before him and smilingly inviting him to drink, he knew they were mocking him, and before turning away he would emit a low growl and show his teeth. It was the one thing that put him out and would make him angry with his friends and life companions.

I should not have related this incident if Dandy had been alive. But he is no longer with us. He was old—half-way between fifteen and sixteen: it seemed as though he had waited to see the end of the war, since no sooner was the armistice proclaimed than he began to decline rapidly. Gone deaf and blind, he still insisted on taking several constitucionals

every day, and would bark as usual at the gate, and if no one came to let him out or admit him, he would open it for himself as before. This went on till January 1919, when some of the boys he knew were coming back to Penzance and to the house. Then he established himself on his sofa, and we knew that his end was near, for there he would sleep all day and all night, and eat no food. It is customary in this country to chloroform a dog and give him a dose of strychnine to "put him out of his misery." But it was not necessary in this case, as he was not in misery; not a groan did he ever emit, waking or sleeping; and if you put a hand on him he would look up and wag his tail just to let you know that it was well with him. And in his sleep he passed away—a perfect case of euthanasia—and was buried in the large garden near the second apple-tree

## THE MAN ON THE KIRKCAPLE SHORE

BEING THE FIRST CHAPTER OF  
"PRESTER JOHN"

BY

JOHN BUCHAN

I MIND as if it were yesterday my first sight of the man. Little I knew at the time how big the moment was with destiny, or how often that face seen in the fitful moonlight would haunt my sleep and disturb my waking hours. But I mind yet the cold grue of terror I got from it, a terror which was surely more

than the due of a few truant lads breaking the Sabbath with their play.

The town of Kirkcapple, of which and its adjacent parish of Portincross my father was the minister, lies on a hillside above the little bay of Caple, and looks squarely out on the North Sea. Round the horns of land which enclose the bay the coast shows on either side a battlement of stark red cliffs through which a burn or two makes a pass to the water's edge. The bay itself is ringed with fine clean sands, where we lads of the burgh school loved to bathe in the warm weather. But on long holidays the sport was to go farther afield among the cliffs; for there there were many deep caves and pools, where podleys might be caught with the line, and hid treasures sought for at the expense of the skin of the knees and the buttons of the trousers. Many a long Saturday I have passed in a crinkle of the cliffs, having lit a fire of driftwood, and made believe that I was a smuggler or a Jacobite new landed from France. There was a band of us in Kirkcapple, lads of my own age, including Archie Leslie, the son of my father's session-clerk, and Tam Dyke, the provost's nephew. We were sealed to silence by the blood oath, and we bore each the name of some historic pirate or sailor-man. I was Paul Jones, Tam was Captain Kidd, and Archie, need I say it, was Morgan himself. Our tryst was a cave where a little water called the Dyve Burn had cut its way through the cliffs to the sea. There we forgathered in the summer evenings and of a Saturday afternoon in winter, and told mighty tales of our prowess and flattered our silly hearts. But the sober truth is that our deeds were of the

humblest, and a dozen of fish or a handful of apples was all our booty, and our greatest exploit a fight with the roughs at the Dyve tan-work.

My father's spring Communion fell on the last Sabbath of April, and on the particular Sabbath of which I speak the weather was mild and bright for the time of year. I had been surfeited with the Thursday's and Saturday's services, and the two long diets of worship on the Sabbath were hard for a lad of twelve to bear with the spring in his bones and the sun slanting through the gallery window. There still remained the service on the Sabbath evening—a doleful prospect, for the Rev. Mr. Murdoch of Kilchristie, noted for the length of his discourses, had exchanged pulpits with my father. So my mind was ripe for the proposal of Archie Leslie, on our way home to tea, that by a little skill we might give the kirk the slip. At our Communion the pews were emptied of their regular occupants and the congregation seated itself as it pleased. The manse seat was full of the Kirkcable relations of Mr. Murdoch, who had been invited there by my mother to hear him, and it was not hard to obtain permission to sit with Archie and Tam Dyke in the cock-loft in the gallery. Word was sent to Tam, and so it happened that three abandoned lads duly passed the plate and took their seats in the cock-loft. But when the bell had done jowing, and we heard by the sounds of their feet that the elders had gone in to the kirk, we slipped down the stairs and out of the side door. We were through the churchyard in a twinkling, and hot-foot on the road to the Dyve Burn.

It was the fashion of the genteel in Kirkcable to

put their boys into what were known as Eton suits—long trousers, cut-away jackets, and chimney-pot hats. I had been one of the earliest victims, and well I remember how I fled home from the Sabbath school with the snowballs of the town roughs rattling off my chimney-pot. Archie had followed, his family being in all things imitators of mine. We were now clothed in this wearisome garb, so our first care was to secrete safely our hats in a marked spot under some whin bushes on the links. Tam was free from the bondage of fashion, and wore his ordinary best knickerbockers. From inside his jacket he unfolded his special treasure, which was to light us on our expedition—an evil-smelling old tin lantern with a shutter.

Tam was of the Free Kirk persuasion, and as his Communion fell on a different day from ours, he was spared the bondage of church attendance from which Archie and I had revolted. But notable events had happened that day in his church. A black man, the Rev. John Something-or-other, had been preaching. Tam was full of the portent. "A nigger," he said, "a great black chap as big as your father, Archie." He seemed to have banged the bookboard with some effect, and had kept Tam, for once in his life, awake. He had preached about the heathen in Africa, and how a black man was as good as a white man in the sight of God, and he had forecast a day when the negroes would have something to teach the British in the way of civilisation. So at any rate ran the account of Tam Dyke, who did not share the preacher's views. "It's all nonsense, Davie. The Bible says that the children of Ham were to be our



servants. If I were the minister I wouldn't let a nigger into the pulpit. I wouldn't let him farther than the Sabbath school."

Night fell as we came to the broomy spaces of the links, and ere we had breasted the slope of the neck which separates Kirkcable Bay from the cliffs it was as dark as an April evening with a full moon can be. Tam would have had it darker. He got out his lantern, and after a prodigious waste of matches kindled the candle-end inside, turned the dark shutter, and trotted happily on. We had no need of his lighting till the Dyve Burn was reached and the path began to descend steeply through the rift in the crags.

It was here we found that someone had gone before us. Archie was great in those days at tracking, his ambition running in Indian paths. He would walk always with his head bent and his eyes on the ground, whereby he several times found lost coins and once a trinket dropped by the provost's wife. At the edge of the burn, where the path turns downward, there is a patch of shingle washed up by some spate. Archie was on his knees in a second. "Lads," he cried, "there's spoor here"; and then after some nosing, "it's a man's track, going downward, a big man with flat feet. It's fresh, too, for it crosses the damp bit of gravel, and the water has scarcely filled the holes yet."

We did not dare to question Archie's woodcraft, but it puzzled us who the stranger could be. In summer weather you might find a party of picnickers here, attracted by the fine hard sands at the burn mouth. But at this time of night and season of the

year there was no call for anyone to be trespassing on our preserves. No fishermen came this way, the lobster-pots being all to the east, and the stark headland of the Red Neb made the road to them by the water's edge difficult. The tan-work lads used to come now and then for a swim, but you would not find a tan-work lad bathing on a chill April night. Yet there was no question where our precursor had gone. He was making for the shore. Tam unshuttered his lantern, and the steps went clearly down the corkscrew path. "Maybe he is after our cave. We'd better go cannily."

The glim was dowsed—the words were Archie's—and in the best contraband manner we stole down the gully. The business had suddenly taken an eerie turn, and I think in our hearts we were all a little afraid. But Tam had a lantern, and it would never do to turn back from an adventure which had all the appearance of being the true sort. Half-way down there is a scrog of wood, dwarf alders and hawthorn, which makes an arch over the path. I, for one, was glad when we got through this with no worse mishap than a stumble from Tam which caused the lantern door to fly open and the candle to go out. We did not stop to relight it, but scrambled down the screes till we came to the long slabs of reddish rock which abutted on the beach. We could not see the track, so we gave up the business of scouts, and dropped quietly over the big boulder and into the crinkle of cliff which we called our cave.

There was nobody there, so we relit the lantern and examined our properties. Two or three fishing-rods for the burn, much damaged by weather; some

sea-lines on a dry shelf of rock; a couple of wooden boxes; a pile of driftwood for fires, and a heap of quartz in which we thought we had found veins of gold—such was the modest furnishing of our den. To this I must add some broken clay pipes, with which we made believe to imitate our elders, smoking a foul mixture of coltsfoot leaves and brown paper. The band was in session, so following our ritual we sent out a picket. Tam was deputed to go round the edge of the cliff from which the shore was visible, and report if the coast was clear.

He returned in three minutes, his eyes round with amazement in the lantern light. "There's a fire on the sands," he repeated, "and a man beside it."

Here was news indeed. Without a word we made for the open, Archie first, and Tam, who had seized and shuttered his lantern, coming last. We crawled to the edge of the cliff and peered round, and there sure enough on the hard bit of sand which the tide had left by the burn mouth was a twinkle of light and a dark figure.

The moon was rising, and besides there was that curious sheen from the sea which you will often notice in spring. The glow was maybe a hundred yards distant, a little spark of fire I could have put in my cap, and, from its crackling and smoke, composed of dry seaweed and half-green branches from the burnside thickets. A man's figure stood near it, and as we looked it moved round and round the fire in circles which first of all widened and then contracted.

The sight was so unexpected, so beyond the beat of our experience, that we were all a little scared. What could this strange being want with a fire at

half-past eight of an April Sabbath night on the Dyve Burn sands? We discussed the thing in whispers behind a boulder, but none of us had any solution. "Belike he's come ashore in a boat," said Archie. "He's maybe a foreigner." But I pointed out that, from the tracks which Archie himself had found, the man must have come overland down the cliffs. Tam was clear he was a madman, and was for withdrawing promptly from the whole business.

But some spell kept our feet tied there in that silent world of sand and moon and sea. I remember looking back and seeing the solemn, frowning faces of the cliffs, and feeling somehow shut in with this unknown being in a strange union. What kind of chance had brought this interloper into our territory? For a wonder I was less afraid than curious. I wanted to get to the heart of the matter, and to discover what the man was up to with his fire and his circles.

The same thought must have been in Archie's head, for he dropped on his belly and began to crawl softly seawards. I followed, and Tam, with sundry complaints, crept after my heels. Between the cliffs and the fire lay some sixty yards of débris and boulders above the level of all but the high spring tides. Beyond lay a string of seaweedy pools and then the hard sands of the burnfoot. There was excellent cover among the big stones, and apart from the distance and the dim light, the man by the fire was too preoccupied in his task to keep much look-out towards the land. I remember thinking he had chosen his place well, for save from the sea he could not be seen. The cliffs are so undercut

that unless a watcher on the coast were on their extreme edge he would not see the burnfoot sands.

Archie, the skilled tracker, was the one who all but betrayed us. His knee slipped on the seaweed, and he rolled off a boulder, bringing down with him a clatter of small stones. We lay as still as mice, in terror lest the man should have heard the noise and have come to look for the cause. By-and-by when I ventured to raise my head above a flat-topped stone I saw that he was undisturbed. The fire still burned, and he was pacing round it.

Just on the edge of the pools was an outcrop of red sandstone much fissured by the sea. Here was an excellent vantage-ground, and all three of us curled behind it, with our eyes just over the edge. The man was not twenty yards off, and I could see clearly what manner of fellow he was. For one thing he was huge of size, or so he seemed to me in the half-light. He wore nothing but a shirt and trousers, and I could hear by the flap of his feet on the sand that he was barefoot.

Suddenly Tam Dyke gave a gasp of astonishment. "Gosh, it's the black minister!" he said.

It was indeed a black man, as we saw when the moon came out of a cloud. His head was on his breast, and he walked round the fire with measured, regular steps. At intervals he would stop and raise both hands to the sky, and bend his body in the direction of the moon. But he never uttered a word.

"It's magic," said Archie. "He's going to raise Satan. We must bide here and see what happens, for he'll grip us if we try to go back. The moon's ower high."

The procession continued as if to some slow music. I had been in no fear of the adventure back there by our cave; but now that I saw the thing from close at hand, my courage began to ebb. There was something desperately uncanny about this great negro, who had shed his clerical garments, and was now practising some strange magic alone by the sea. I had no doubt it was the black art, for there was that in the air and the scene which spelled the unlawful. As we watched, the circles stopped, and the man threw something on the fire. A thick smoke rose of which we could feel the aromatic scent, and when it was gone the flame burned with a silvery blueness like moonlight. Still no sound came from the minister, but he took something from his belt, and began to make odd markings in the sand between the inner circle and the fire. As he turned, the moon gleamed on the implement, and we saw it was a great knife.

We were now scared in real earnest. Here were we, three boys, at night in a lonely place a few yards from a great savage with a knife. The adventure was far past my liking, and even the intrepid Archie was having qualms, if I could judge from his set face. As for Tam, his teeth were chattering like a threshing-mill.

Suddenly I felt something soft and warm on the rock at my right hand. I felt again, and, lo! it was the man's clothes. There were his boots and socks, his minister's coat and his minister's hat.

This made the predicament worse, for if we waited till he finished his rites we should for certain be found by him. At the same time, to return over the boulders in the bright moonlight seemed an equally

sure way to discovery. I whispered to Archie, who was for waiting a little longer. "Something may turn up," he said. It was always his way.

I do not know what would have turned up, for we had no chance of testing it. The situation had proved too much for the nerves of Tam Dyke. As the man turned towards us in his bowings and bendings, Tam suddenly sprang to his feet and shouted at him a piece of schoolboy rudeness then fashionable in Kirkcapple.

"Wha called ye partan-face, my bonny man?"

Then, clutching his lantern, he ran for dear life, while Archie and I raced at his heels. As I turned I had a glimpse of a huge figure, knife in hand, bounding towards us.

Though I only saw it in the turn of a head, the face stamped itself indelibly upon my mind. It was black, black as ebony, but it was different from the ordinary negro. There were no thick lips and flat nostrils; rather, if I could trust my eyes, the nose was high-bridged, and the lines of the mouth sharp and firm. But it was distorted into an expression of such terror and devilish fury and amazement that my heart became like water.

We had a start, as I have said, of some twenty or thirty yards. Among the boulders we were not at a great disadvantage, for a boy can flit quickly over them, while a grown man must pick his way. Archie, as ever, kept his wits the best of us. "Make straight for the burn," he shouted in a hoarse whisper; "we'll beat him on the slope."

We passed the boulders and slithered over the outcrop of red rock and the patches of sea-pink till

we reached the channel of the Dyve water, which flows gently among pebbles after leaving the gully. Here for the first time I looked back and saw nothing. I stopped involuntarily, and that halt was nearly my undoing. For our pursuer had reached the burn before us, but lower down, and was coming up its bank to cut us off.

At most times I am a notable coward, and in these days I was still more of one, owing to a quick and easily-heated imagination. But now I think I did a brave thing, though more by instinct than resolution. Archie was running first, and had already splashed through the burn; Tam came next, just about to cross, and the black man was almost at his elbow. Another second and Tam would have been in his clutches had I not yelled out a warning and made straight up the bank of the burn. Tam fell into the pool—I could hear his spluttering cry—but he got across; for I heard Archie call to him, and the two vanished into the thicket which clothes all the left bank of the gully. The pursuer, seeing me on his own side of the water, followed straight on; and before I knew it had become a race between the two of us.

I was hideously frightened, but not without hope, for the scree and shelves of this right side of the gully were known to me from many a day's exploring. I was light on my feet and uncommonly sound in wind, being by far the best long-distance runner in Kirkcapple. If I could only keep my lead till I reached a certain corner I knew of, I could outwit my enemy; for it was possible from that place to make a detour behind a waterfall and get into a secret path of ours among the bushes. I flew up the steep scree, not



daring to look round; but at the top, where the rocks begin, I had a glimpse of my pursuer. The man could run. Heavy in build though he was, he was not six yards behind me, and I could see the white of his eyes and the red of his gums. I saw something else—a glint of white metal in his hand. He still had his knife.

Fear sent me up the rocks like a seagull, and I scrambled and leaped, making for the corner I knew of. Something told me that the pursuit was slackening, and for a moment I halted to look round. A second time a halt was nearly the end of me. A great stone flew through the air, and took the cliff an inch from my head, half-blinding me with splinters. And now I began to get angry. I pulled myself into cover, skirted a rock till I came to my corner, and looked back for the enemy. There he was scrambling by the way I had come, and making a prodigious clatter among the stones. I picked up a loose bit of rock and hurled it with all my force in his direction. It broke before it reached him, but a considerable lump to my joy took him full in the face. Then my terrors revived. I slipped behind the waterfall and was soon in the thicket, and toiling towards the top.

I think this last bit was the worst in the race, for my strength was failing, and I seemed to hear those horrid steps at my heels. My heart was in my mouth as, careless of my best clothes, I tore through the hawthorn bushes. Then I struck the path and, to my relief, came on Archie and Tam, who were running slowly in desperate anxiety about my fate. We then took hands and soon reached the top of the gully.

For a second we looked back. The pursuit had ceased, and far down the burn we could hear the sounds as of someone going back to the sands.

"Your face is bleeding, Davie. Did he get near enough to hit you?" Archie asked.

"He hit me with a stone. But I gave him better. He's got a bleeding nose to remember this night by."

We did not dare take the road by the links, but made for the nearest human habitation. This was a farm about half a mile inland, and when we reached it we lay down by the stack-yard gate and panted.

"I've lost my lantern," said Tam. "The big black brute! See if I don't tell my father."

"Ye'll do nothing of the kind," said Archie fiercely. "He knows nothing about us and can't do us any harm. But if the story got out and he found out who we were, he'd murder the lot of us."

He made us swear secrecy, which we were willing enough to do, seeing very clearly the sense in his argument. Then we found the highroad and trotted back at our best pace to Kirkcapple, fear of our families gradually ousting fear of pursuit. In our excitement Archie and I forgot about our Sabbath hats, reposing quietly below a whin bush on the links.

We were not destined to escape without detection. As ill luck would have it, Mr. Murdoch had been taken ill with the stomach-ache after the second psalm, and the congregation had been abruptly dispersed. My mother had waited for me at the church door, and, seeing no signs of her son, had searched the gallery. Then the truth came out, and, had I been only for a mild walk on the links, retribution would have overtaken my truancy. But to

add to this I arrived home with a scratched face, no hat, and several rents in my best trousers. I was well cuffed and sent to bed, with the promise of full-dress chastisement when my father should come home in the morning.

My father arrived before breakfast next day, and I was duly and soundly whipped. I set out for school with aching bones to add to the usual depression of Monday morning. At the corner of the Nethergate I fell in with Archie, who was staring at a trap carrying two men which was coming down the street. It was the Free Church minister—he had married a rich wife and kept a horse—driving the preacher of yesterday to the railway station. Archie and I were in behind a doorpost in a twinkling, so that we could see in safety the last of our enemy. He was dressed in minister's clothes, with a heavy fur-coat and a brand-new yellow-leather Gladstone bag. He was talking loudly as he passed, and the Free Church minister seemed to be listening attentively. I heard his deep voice saying something about the "work of God in this place." But what I noticed specially—and the sight made me forget my aching hinder parts—was that he had a swollen eye, and two strips of sticking-plaster on his cheek.<sup>1</sup>

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## SPRING IN SOUTHERN ENGLAND

BEING A SELECTED PORTION FROM  
"THE SOUTH COUNTRY"

BY

EDWARD THOMAS

NEXT day the wind has flown and the snow is again almost rain: there is ever a hint of pale sky above, but it is not as luminous as the earth. The trees over the road have a beauty of darkness and moistness. Beyond them the earth is a sainted corpse, with a blue light over it that is fast annihilating all matter and turning the landscape to a spirit only. Night and the snow descend upon it, and at dawn the nests are full of snow. The yews and junipers on a league of Downs are chequered white upon white slopes, and the green larches support cirrous clouds of snow. In the garden the daffodils bend criss-cross under snow that cannot quite conceal the yellow flowers. But the snow has ceased. The sky is at first pale without a cloud and tender as from a long imprisonment; it deepens in hue as the sun climbs and gathers force. The crooked paths up the Downs begin to glitter like streaks of lightning. The thrushes sing. From the straight dark beeches the snow cannot fall fast enough in great drops, in showers, in masses that release the boughs with a quiver and a gleam. The green leaves close to the ground creep out, and against them the snow is blue. A little sighing wind rustles

ivy and juniper and yew. The sun mounts, and from his highest battlement of cloud blows a long blast of light over the pure land. Once more the larch is wholly green, the beech rosy brown with buds. A cart goes by all a-gleam with a load of crimson-sprouting swedes and yellow-sprouting mangolds that seem to be burning through the net of snow above them. Down each side of every white road runs a stream that sings and glitters in ripples like innumerable crystal flowers. Water drips and trickles and leaps and gushes and oozes everywhere, and extracts the fragrance of earth and green and flowers under the heat that hastens to undo the work of the snow. The air is hot and wet. The snow is impatient to be water again. It still makes a cape over the briers and brambles, and there is a constant drip and steam and song of drops from the crossing branches in the cave below. Loud sounds the voice of leaf and branch and imprisoned water in the languor and joy of their escape. On every hand there is a drip and gush and ooze of water, a crackle and rustle and moan of plants and trees unfolding and unbending and greeting air and light; a close, humid, many-perfumed host; wet gloom and a multitudinous glitter; a movement of water and of the shadows like puffs of smoke that fleet over the white fields under the clouds.

And over and through it a cuckoo is crying and crying, first overhead, then afar, and gradually near and retreating again. He is soon gone, but the ears are long afterwards able to extract the spirit of the song, the exact interval of it, from among all the lasting sounds, until we hear it as clearly as before,

out of the blue sky, out of the white cloud, out of the shining grey water. It is a word of power—cuckoo! The melting of the snow is faster than ever, and at the end of the day there is none left except in some hollows of the Downs on the slopes behind the top-most of the beeches that darkly fringe the violet sky. In the misty shutting of the light there are a thousand songs laced by cuckoos' cries and the first hooting of owls, and the beeches have become merely straight lines of pearl in a mist of their own boughs. Below them, in the high woods, goes on the fall of the melting snow through the gloomy air, and the splash on the dead leaves. This gloom and monotonous sound make an exquisite cloister, visited but not disturbed by the sound of the blackbirds singing in the mist of the vale underneath. Slowly the mist has deepened from the woods to the vale and now the eye cannot see from tree to tree. Then the straight heavy rain descends upon the songs and the clatterings of blackbirds, and when they are silenced the moorhen's watery hoot announces that the world belongs to the beasts and the rainy dark until to-morrow.

Beautiful upon the waters, beautiful upon the mountains, is the cuckoo's song, and most rare over the snow. But of all places and hours I should choose the crags of Land's End in a dawn of June; and let it be the end of that month and the wind be grey and cold, so that the ships stagger in the foam and crag-like waves as they catch the early light tenderly upon their sails. The cold beams, the high precipices yet full of shadow and of the giddy calling of daw and gull, the black but white-lipped water and the

blacker cormorant flying straight across it just over the foam, the sky golden yet still pallid and trembling from the dungeon of night—through it floats that beloved voice breaking, breaking, and the strong year at the summit of its career has begun to decline. The song is memorable and fair also when the drenched gardens toss and spread their petals in the grass. Many a one hears it who will not hear it again, and many that once expected it impatiently hears it no more because he is old and deaf or because his heart is closed. There is not a broad and perfect day of heat and wind and sunshine that is not haunted by that voice seeming to say the earth is hollow under our feet and the sky hollow over our heads.

There are whole nights when the cuckoo will not sleep, and the woods on either side of a road twenty miles long emit the cry of these conquerors under the full moon and the white stars of love. If you pause it will appear that it is not a silence that this song rules over; for what was a silence was full of sounds, as many sounds as there are leaves, sounds of creeping, gliding, pattering, rustling, slow wormlike continuous noises and sudden sounds. And strangely at length is the glorious day reared high upon the ruins of this night, of which the survivors slink away into the old forgotten roads, the dense woods, the chimneys of deserted houses.

It is a jolly note only when the bird is visible close at hand and the power of his throat is felt. Often two or three will answer one another, or for half a day will loiter about a coombe for the sake of an echo. It is one of the richest sounds in nature when two sing together, the second note of one being

almost blended with the first of the other; and so they continue as if themselves entranced by the harmony, and the navvy leans upon his pick to listen.

. . . . .

On the day after the great melting of the snow the white beam tree, at the edges of high woods and in the midst of the beeches, has its hour, when its thousands of large white buds point upward like a multitudinous candelabrum. For me the white beam is always associated with wayfaring. Its white buds are the traveller's joy of spring. The buds like blossoms or flames bewitch from afar off. They are always upon sloping ground and usually upon hill-sides in the chalk land. In the autumn their leaves often shrivel before falling, and turn to a colour that looks like pink almond blossom by contrast with juniper and yew. When they have fallen, they are as much to be noticed. They lie commonly with their white undersides uppermost, and though rain soaks them and wind scatters them and they are trodden down, they preserve their whiteness until the winter or the following spring. It is a tree that belongs, above all others except the yew, to the Pilgrims' Way, and it is impossible to forget these leaves lying white on the untouched wayside sward, among the dewy purple and crimson and gold of other leaves, sparkling in the sun and entering into all the thoughts and fancies and recollections that come to one who goes in solitude along that old road when the scent of the dying year is pungent as smoke and sweet as flowers.



## THE ROAD INTO FAIRY LAND

BEING THE FIRST CHAPTER OF "PHANTASTES"

BY

GEORGE MACDONALD

I AWOKE one morning with the usual perplexity of mind which accompanies the return of consciousness. As I lay and looked through the eastern window of my room, a faint streak of peach-colour, dividing a cloud that just rose above the low swell of the horizon, announced the approach of the sun. As my thoughts, which a deep and apparently dreamless sleep had dissolved, began again to assume crystalline forms, the strange events of the foregoing night presented themselves anew to my wondering consciousness. The day before had been my one-and-twentieth birthday. Among other ceremonies investing me with my legal rights, the keys of an old secretary, in which my father had kept his private papers, had been delivered up to me. As soon as I was left alone, I ordered lights in the chamber where the secretary stood, the first lights that had been there for many a year; for, since my father's death, the room had been left undisturbed. But, as if the darkness had been too long an inmate to be easily expelled, and had dyed with blackness the walls to which, bat-like, it had clung, these tapers served but ill to light up the gloomy hangings, and seemed to throw yet darker shadows into the hollows of the deep-wrought cornice. All the further portions of

the room lay shrouded in a mystery whose deepest folds were gathered around the dark oak cabinet which I now approached with a strange mingling of reverence and curiosity. Perhaps, like a geologist, I was about to turn up to the light some of the buried strata of the human world, with its fossil remains charred by passion and petrified by tears. Perhaps I was to learn how my father, whose personal history was unknown to me, had woven his web of story; how he had found the world, and how the world had left him. Perhaps I was to find only the records of lands and moneys, how gotten and how secured; coming down from strange men, and through troublous times, to me, who knew little or nothing of them all.

To solve my speculations, and to dispel the awe which was fast gathering around me as if the dead were drawing near, I approached the secretary; and having found the key that fitted the upper portion, I opened it with some difficulty, drew near it a heavy high-backed chair, and sat down before a multitude of little drawers and slides and pigeon-holes. But the door of a little cupboard in the centre especially attracted my interest, as if there lay the secret of this long-hidden world. Its key I found. One of the rusty hinges cracked and broke as I opened the door: it revealed a number of small pigeon-holes. These, however, being but shallow compared with the depth of those around the little cupboard, the outer ones reaching to the back of the desk, I concluded that there must be some accessible space behind; and found, indeed, that they were formed in a separate framework, which admitted of the whole being pulled

out in one piece. Behind, I found a sort of flexible portcullis of small bars of wood laid close together horizontally. After long search, and trying many ways to move it, I discovered at last a scarcely projecting point of steel on one side. I pressed this repeatedly and hard with the point of an old tool that was lying near, till at length it yielded inwards; and the little slide, flying up suddenly, disclosed a chamber—empty, except that in one corner lay a little heap of withered rose-leaves, whose long-lived scent had long since departed; and in another, a small packet of papers, tied with a bit of ribbon, whose colour had gone with the rose scent. Almost fearing to touch them, they witnessed so mutely to the law of oblivion, I leaned back in my chair, and regarded them for a moment, when suddenly there stood on the threshold of the little chamber, as though she had just emerged from its depth, a tiny woman-form, as perfect in shape as if she had been a small Greek statuette roused to life and motion. Her dress was of a kind that could never grow old-fashioned, because it was simply natural: a robe plaited in a band around the neck, and confined by a belt about the waist, descended to her feet. It was only afterwards, however, that I took notice of her dress, although my surprise was by no means of so overpowering a degree as such an apparition might naturally be expected to excite. Seeing, however, as I suppose, some astonishment in my countenance, she came forward within a yard of me, and said, in a voice that strangely recalled a sensation of twilight and reedy river banks, and a low wind, even in this deathly room:

"Anodos, you never saw such a little creature before, did you?"

"No," said I; "and indeed I hardly believe I do now."

"Ah! that is always the way with you men; you believe nothing the first time; and it is foolish enough to let mere repetition convince you of what you consider in itself unbelievable. I am not going to argue with you, however, but to grant you a wish."

Here I could not help interrupting her with the foolish speech, of which, however, I had no cause to repent:

"How can such a very little creature as you grant or refuse anything?"

"Is that all the philosophy you have gained in one-and-twenty years?" she said. "Form is much, but size is nothing. It is a mere matter of relation. I suppose your six-foot lordship does not feel altogether insignificant, though to others you do look small beside your old Uncle Ralph, who rises above you a great half-foot at least. But size is of so little consequence with me, that I may as well accommodate myself to your foolish prejudices."

So saying, she leapt from the desk upon the floor, where she stood a tall, gracious lady, with pale face and large blue eyes. Her dark hair flowed behind, wavy but uncurled, down to her waist, and against it her form stood clear in its robe of white.

"Now," said she, "you will believe me."

Overcome with the presence of a beauty which I could now perceive, and drawn towards her by an attraction irresistible as incomprehensible, I suppose I stretched out my arms towards her, for she drew back a step or two, and said:

"Foolish boy, if you could touch me, I should hurt you. Besides, I was two hundred and thirty-seven years old, last Midsummer eve; and a man must not fall in love with his grandmother, you know."

"But you are not my grandmother," said I.

"How do you know that?" she retorted. "I dare say you know something of your great-grandfathers a good deal further back than that; but you know very little about your great-grandmothers on either side. Now, to the point. Your little sister was reading a fairy-tale to you last night."

"She was."

"When she had finished, she said, as she closed the book, 'Is there a fairy-country, brother?' You replied with a sigh, 'I suppose there is, if one could find the way into it.'"

"I did; but I meant something quite different from what you seem to think."

"Never mind what I seem to think. You shall find the way into Fairy Land to-morrow. Now look in my eyes."

Eagerly I did so. They filled me with an unknown longing. I remembered somehow that my mother died when I was a baby. I looked deeper and deeper, till they spread around me like seas, and I sank in their waters. I forgot all the rest, till I found myself at the window, whose gloomy curtains were withdrawn, and where I stood gazing on a whole heaven of stars, small and sparkling in the moonlight. Below lay a sea, still as death and hoary in the moon, sweeping into bays and around capes and islands. away, away, I knew not whither. Alas! it was no sea, but a low bog burnished by the moon. "Surely

there is such a sea somewhere!" said I to myself. 'A low sweet voice beside me replied.

"In Fairy Land, Anodos."

I turned, but saw no one. I closed the secretary, and went to my own room, and to bed.

All this I recalled as I lay with half-closed eyes. I was soon to find the truth of the lady's promise, that this day I should discover the road into Fairy Land.

## CEDRIC

BEING A DESCRIPTIVE PASSAGE FROM  
"LITTLE LORD FAUNTLEROY"

BY

FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT

WHEN he was old enough to walk out with his nurse, dragging a small waggon and wearing a short white kilt skirt, and a big white hat set back on his curly yellow hair, he was so handsome and strong and rosy that he attracted everyone's attention, and his nurse would come home and tell his mamma stories of the ladies who had stopped their carriages to look at and speak to him, and of how pleased they were when he talked to them in his cheerful little way, as if he had known them always. His greatest charm was this cheerful, fearless, quaint little way of making friends with people. I think it arose from his having a very confiding nature, and a kind little heart that sympathised with everyone, and wished to make everyone as comfortable as he liked to be himself.

It made him very quick to understand the feelings of those about him. Perhaps this had grown on him, too, because he had lived so much with his father and mother, who were always loving and considerate and tender and well-bred. He had never heard an unkind or uncourteous word spoken at home, he had always been loved and caressed and treated tenderly, and so his childish soul was full of kindness and innocent warm feeling. He had always heard his mamma called by pretty loving names, and so he used them himself when he spoke to her; he had always seen that his papa watched over her and took great care of her, and so he learned, too, to be careful of her.

So when he knew his papa would come back no more and saw how very sad his mamma was, there gradually came into his kind little heart the thought that he must do what he could to make her happy. He was not much more than a baby, but that thought was in his mind whenever he climbed upon her knee and kissed her, and put his curly head on her neck, and when he brought his toys and picture-books to show her, and when he curled up quietly by her side as she used to lie on the sofa. He was not old enough to know of anything else to do, so he did what he could, and was more of a comfort to her than he could have understood.

"Oh, Mary!" he heard her say once to her old servant; "I am sure he is trying to help me in his innocent way—I know he is. He looks at me sometimes with a loving, wondering little look, as if he were sorry for me, and then he will come and pet me or show me something. He is such a little man, I really think he knows."

As he grew older, he had a great many quaint little ways which amused and interested people greatly. He was so much of a companion for his mother that she scarcely cared for any other. They used to walk together and talk together and play together. When he was quite a little fellow he learned to read; and after that he used to lie on the hearth-rug, in the evening, and read aloud—sometimes stories, and sometimes big books such as older people read, and sometimes even the newspaper; and often at such times Mary, in the kitchen, would hear Mrs. Errol laughing with delight at the quaint things he said.

“And, indade,” said Mary to the groceryman, “nobody cud help laughin’ at the quare little ways of him—and his ould-fashioned sayin’s! Didn’t he come into my kitchen the noight the new prisident was nominated and shtand afore the fire, lookin’ loike a pictur’, wid his hands in his shmall pockets, an’ his innocent bit of a face as sayrious as a jedge? An’ sez he to me: ‘Mary,’ sez he, ‘I’m very much int’rusted in the ’lection,’ sez he. ‘I’m a ’publican, an’ so is Dearest. Are you a ’publican, Mary?’ ‘Sorra a bit,’ sez I; ‘I’m the bist o’ dimmycrats!’ An’ he looks up at me wid a look that ud go to yer heart, and sez he: ‘Mary,’ sez he, ‘the country will go to ruin.’ An’ nivver a day since thin has he let go by widout argyin’ wid me to change me polytics.”

Mary was very fond of him, and very proud of him, too. She had been with his mother ever since he was born; and, after his father’s death, had been cook and housemaid and nurse and everything else. She was proud of his graceful, strong little body, and



his pretty manners, especially proud of the bright curly hair which waved over his forehead, and fell in charming love-locks on his shoulders. She was willing to work early and late to help his mamma to make his small suits and keep them in order.

"'Ristycratic, is it?" she would say. "Faith and I'd loike to see the child on Fifth Avey-*noo* as looks loike him an' shteps out as handsome as himself. An' ivvery man, woman, and choild lookin' afther him in his bit of a black velvet skirt made out of the misthress's ould gownd; an' his little head up an' his curly hair flyin' an' shinin'. It's loike a young lord he looks."

Cedric did not know that he looked like a young lord; he did not know what a lord was. His greatest friend was the groceryman at the corner—the cross groceryman, who was never cross to him. His name was Mr. Hobbs, and Cedric admired and respected him very much. He thought him a very rich and powerful person, he had so many things in his store—prunes and figs and oranges and biscuits,—and he had a horse and waggon. Cedric was fond of the milkman and the baker and the apple-woman, but he liked Mr. Hobbs best of all, and was on terms of such intimacy with him that he went to see him every day, and often sat with him quite a long time discussing the topics of the hour. It was quite surprising how many things they found to talk about—the Fourth of July, for instance. When they began to talk about the Fourth of July there really seemed no end to it. Mr. Hobbs had a very bad opinion of "the British," and he told the whole story of the Revolution, relating very wonderful and patriotic

stories about the villainy of the enemy and the bravery of the Revolutionary heroes, and he even generously repeated part of the Declaration of Independence. Cedric was so excited that his eyes shone and his cheeks were red and his curls were all rubbed and tumbled into a yellow mop. He could hardly wait to eat his dinner after he went home, he was so anxious to tell his mamma. It was, perhaps, Mr. Hobbs who gave him his first interest in politics. Mr. Hobbs was fond of reading the newspapers, and so Cedric heard a great deal about what was going on in Washington, and Mr. Hobbs would tell him whether the president was doing his duty or not. And once, when there was an election, he found it all quite grand, and probably but for Mr. Hobbs and Cedric the country might have been wrecked. Mr. Hobbs took him to see a great torch-light procession, and many of the men who carried torches remembered afterwards a stout man who stood near a lamp-post and held on his shoulder a handsome little shouting boy, who waved his cap in the air.<sup>1</sup>

### THE FISH HAWKS

BEING AN EXTRACT FROM "FISHERS OF THE AIR"  
("WISDOM OF THE WILDERNESS")

BY

CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS

ONE of those big grey lake-trout, or "togue," which, as a rule, lurk obstinately in the utmost depths, rose slowly to investigate the floating body of a dead

<sup>1</sup> Copyright in the United States by Charles Scribner's Sons.

swallow. Pausing a few inches below the surface, he considered as to whether he should gulp down the morsel or not. Deciding, through some fishy caprice, to leave it alone—possibly he had once been hooked, and broken himself free with a painful gullet! — he was turning away to sink lazily back into the depths when something like a thunderbolt crashed down upon the water just above him, and fiery pincers of horn fixed themselves deep into his massive back.

With a convulsive surge of his broad-fluked, muscular tail he tried to dive, and for a second drew his assailant clean under. But in the next moment the osprey, with a mighty beating of wings which thrashed the water into foam, forced him to the surface and lifted him clear. But he was too heavy for his captor, and almost immediately he found himself partly back in his own element, sufficiently submerged to make mighty play with his lashing tail. For all his frantic struggles, however, he could not again get clear under, so as to make full use of his strength; and neither could his adversary, for all his tremendous flapping, succeed in holding him in the air for more than a second or two at a time.

And so the furious struggle, half upon and half above the surface, went on between these two so evenly - matched opponents, while the tormented water boiled and foamed and showers of bright spray leapt into the air. But the osprey was fighting with brains as well as with wings and talons. He was slowly but surely urging his adversary over toward that white beach below the hog-back, where, in the shallows, he would have him at his mercy and be able to end the duel with a stroke or two of his

rending beak. If his strength could hold out till he gained the beach, he would be sure of victory. But the strain, as unusual as it was tremendous, was already beginning to tell upon him, and he was yet some way from shore.

His mate, in the meantime, had been watching everything from her high perch on the edge of the nest. At sight of the robber eagle's attack and his theft of the chub her crest feathers had lifted angrily, but she had made no vain move to interfere. She knew that such an episode was all in the day's fishing, and might be counted a cheap way of purchasing immunity for the time. When her gallant partner first lifted the big lake-trout into the air, her bright eyes flamed with fierce approval. But when she saw that he was in difficulties her whole expression changed. Her eyes narrowed, and she leaned forward intently with half-raised wings. A moment more, and she was darting with swift, short wing-beats to his help.

By the time she arrived the desperate combatants were nearing the shore, though the big fish was still resisting with undiminished vigour, while his captor, though undaunted, was beginning to show signs of distress. With excited cries of *Pip-pip, pip-pip*, she hovered close above her mate, seeking to strike her eager talons into his opponent's head. But his threshing wings impeded her, and it was some moments before she could accomplish it without hampering his struggle. At last she saw her opportunity, and with a lightning pounce fixed her talons upon the fish's head. They bit deep, and through and through. On the instant his struggles grew

feeble, then died away. The exhausted male let go his hold and rose a few yards into the air on heavy wings; while his victorious mate flapped inwards to the beach, half carrying her prey, half dragging it through the water. With a mighty effort she drew it clear up on the silver sand. Then she dropped it and alighted beside it, with one foot firmly clutching it in sign of victory. Her mate promptly landed beside her, whereupon she withdrew her grip, in acknowledgment that the kill was truly his.

After a few minutes' rest, during which the male bird shook and preened his ruffled plumage into order, the pair fell to at the feast, tearing off great fragments of their prey and devouring them hastily, lest the eagle should return, or the eagle's yet more savage mate, and snatch the booty from them. Their object was to reduce it to a size that could be carried home conveniently to the nest. In this they were making swift progress when the banquet was interrupted. A long-limbed woodsman in grey homespun, with a grizzled beard and twinkling grey-blue eyes, and a rifle over his shoulder, came suddenly into close view around a bend of the shore.

The two ospreys left their feast and flapped up into the top of a near-by pine tree. They knew the man, and knew him unoffending as far as they were concerned. He had been a near neighbour ever since their arrival from the south that spring, for his rough shack, roofed with sheets of whitish-yellow birch-bark, stood in full view of their nest and hardly two hundred paces from it. Furthermore, they were well accustomed to the sight of him in his canoe on the lake, where he was scarcely less assiduous a

fisherman than themselves. But they were shy of him, nevertheless, and would not let him watch them at their feeding. They preferred to watch him instead, unafraid and quite unresentful, but mildly curious, as he strolled up to the mangled body of the fish and turned it over with the toe of his moccasined foot.

"Jee - hoshaphat!" he muttered admiringly. "Who'd ever a' thought them there fish-hawks could a' handled a togue ez big ez that? Some birds!"

He waved a lean and hairy brown hand approvingly at the two ospreys in the pine-top, and then moved on with his loose-jointed stride up through the trees towards his shack. The birds sat watching him impassively, :: :: :: to resume their feast till he should be out of sight. And the big fish lay glittering in the sun, a staringly conspicuous object on the empty beach.

But other eyes meanwhile—shrewd, savage, greedy eyes—had marked and coveted the alluring prize. The moment the woodsman disappeared around the nearest clump of firs, an immense black bear burst out through the underbrush and came slouching down the beach towards the dead fish. He did not hurry—for who among the wild kindreds would be so bold as to interfere with him, the monarch of the wild?

He was within five or six feet of the prey. Then there was a sudden rush of wind above his head—harsh, rigid wings brushed confusingly across his face—and the torn body of the fish, snatched from under his very nose, was swept into the air. With a squeal of disappointed fury he made a lunge for it, but he was too late. The female osprey, fresher than

her mate, had again intervened in time to save the prize, and lifted it beyond his reach.

Now, under ordinary circumstances the bear had no grudge against the ospreys. But this was an insult not to be borne. The fish had been left upon the beach, and he regarded it as his. To be robbed of his prey was the most intolerable of affronts; and there is no beast more tenacious than the bear in avenging any wrong to his personal dignity.

The osprey, weighed down by her heavy burden, flew low and slowly toward the nest. Her mate flew just above her, encouraging her with soft cries of *Pip-pip-pip, pip-pip-pip, pip-pip-pip*; while the bear galloped lumberingly beneath, his heart swelling with vindictive wrath. Hasten as he would, however, he soon lost sight of them; but he knew very well where the nest was, having seen it many times in his prowlings, so he kept on, chewing his plans for vengeance. He would teach the presumptuous birds that his overlordship of the forest was not lightly to be flouted.

After four or five minutes of clambering over a tangle of rocks and windfalls he arrived at the foot of the naked pine trunk which bore the huge nest in its crotch, nearly fifty feet above the ground. He paused for a moment to glare up at it with wicked eyes. The two ospreys, apparently heedless of his presence and its dreadful menace, were busily tearing fragments of the fish into fine shreds and feeding their hungry nestlings — *his* fish, as the bear told himself, raging at their insolent self-confidence. He would claw the nest to pieces from beneath, and devour both the nestlings themselves and the prey

which had been snatched from him. He reared himself against the trunk and began to climb—laboriously, because the trunk was too huge for a good grip, and with a loud rattling of claws upon the dry, resonant wood.

At that first ominous sound the ospreys took alarm. Peering both together over the edge of the nest, they realised at once the appalling peril beyond anything they had ever dreamed. With sharp cries of rage and despair they swooped downwards and dashed madly upon their monstrous foe. First one and then the other, and sometimes both together, they struck him, buffeting him about the face with their wings, stabbing at him in a frenzy with beak and talons. He could not strike back them, but, on the other hand, they could make little impression upon his tough hide under the dense mat of fur. The utmost they could do was to hamper and delay his progress a little. He showed his eyes and climbed on doggedly, intent upon his vengeance.

The woodsman, approaching his shack, was struck by that chorus of shrill cries, with a note in the which he had never heard before. From where he stood he could see the nest, but not the trunk beneath it. "Somethin' wrong there!" he muttered, and hurried forward to get a better view. Pushing through a curtain of fir trees he saw the huge black form of the bear, now half-way up the trunk, and the devoted ospreys fighting madly, but in vain, to drive him back. His eyes twinkled with appreciation, and for half a minute or so he stood watching, while the shaggy shape of doom crept slowly upwards. "Sor-



birds, sure, them fish-hawks!" he muttered finally, and raised his rifle.

As the flat crash of the heavy Winchester '38 startled the forest, the bear gave a grunting squawl, hung clawing for a moment, slithered downward a few feet, then fell clear out from the trunk and dropped with a thud upon the rock below. The frantic birds darted down after him, heedless of the sound of the rifle, and struck at him again and again. But in a moment or two they perceived that he was no longer anything more than a harmless mass of dead flesh and fur. Alighting beside him, they examined him curiously, as if wondering how they had done it. Then, filled with exultation over their victory, they both flew back to the nest and went on feeding their young.<sup>1</sup>

## AT THE COLLEGE

BEING AN INCIDENT FROM "THE LITTLE MINISTER"

BY

SIR J. M. BARRIE

THERE was a black year when the things of this world, especially its pastimes, took such a grip of Gavin that he said to Margaret that he would rather be good at the high jump than the author of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. That year passed, and Gavin came to his right mind. One afternoon Margaret was at home making a glengarry for him out of a piece of carpet, and giving it a tartan edging, when

<sup>1</sup> Copyright in the United States by the Macmillan Co. of New York.

the boy bounded in from school, crying, "Come quick, mother, and you'll see him." Margaret reached the door in time to see a street musician flying from Gavin and his friends. "Did you take stock of him, mother?" the boy asked when he reappeared with the mark of a muddy stick on his back. "He's a Papist! — a sore sight, mother, a sore sight. We stoned him for persecuting the noble Martyrs."

When Gavin was twelve he went to the university, and also got a place in a shop as errand boy. He used to run through the streets between his work and his classes. Potatoes and salt fish, which could then be got at twopence the pound if bought by the half-hundredweight, were his food. There was not always a good meal for two, yet when Gavin reached home at night there was generally something ready for him, and Margaret had supped "hours ago." Gavin's hunger urged him to fall to, but his love for his mother made him watchful.

"What did you have yourself, mother?" he would demand suspiciously.

"Oh, I had a fine supper, I assure you."

"What had you?"

"I had potatoes, for one thing."

"And dripping?"

"You may be sure."

"Mother, you're cheating me. The dripping hasn't been touched since yesterday."

"I dinna—don't—care for dripping—no much."

Then would Gavin stride the room fiercely, a queer little figure.

"Do you think I'll stand this, mother? Will I let

myself be pampered with dripping and every delicacy while you starve?"

"Gavin, I really dinna care for dripping."

"Then I'll give up my classes, and we can have butter"

"I assure you I'm no hungry. It's different wi' a growing laddie"

"I'm not a growing laddie," Gavin would say, bitterly; "but, mother, I warn you that not another bite passes my throat till I see you eating too."

So Margaret had to take her seat at the table, and when she said, "I can eat no more," Gavin retorted sternly, "Nor will I, for fine I see through you."

These two were as one far more than most married people, and, just as Gavin in his childhood reflected his mother, she now reflected him. The people for whom she sewed thought it was contact with them that had rubbed the broad Scotch from her tongue, but she was only keeping pace with Gavin. When she was excited the Harvie words came back to her, as they come back to me. I have taught the English language all my life, and I try to write it, but everything I say in this book I first think to myself in the Doric. This, too, I notice, that in talking to myself I am broader than when gossiping with the farmers of the glen, who send their children to me to learn English, and then jeer at them if they say "old lights" instead of "auld lights."

To Margaret it was happiness to sit through the long evenings sewing, and look over her work at Gavin as he read or wrote or recited to himself the learning of the schools. But she coughed every time the weather changed, and then Gavin would start.

"You must go to your bed, mother," he would say, tearing himself from his books; or he would sit beside her and talk of the dream that was common to both—a dream of a manse where Margaret was mistress and Gavin was called the minister. Every night Gavin was at his mother's bedside to wind her shawl round her feet, and while he did it Margaret smiled.

"Mother, this is the chaff pillow you've taken out of my bed, and given me your feather one."

"Gavin, you needna change them. I winna have the feather pillow."

"Do you dare to think I'll let you sleep on chaff? Put up your head. Now, is that soft?"

"It's fine. I dinna deny but what I sleep better on feathers. Do you mind, Gavin, you bought this pillow for me the moment you got your bursary money?"

The reserve that is a wall between many of the Scottish poor had been broken down by these two. When he saw his mother sleeping happily, Gavin went back to his work. To save the expense of a lamp, he would put his book almost beneath the dying fire, and, taking the place of the fender, read till he was shivering with cold.

"Gavin, it is near morning, and you not in your bed yet! What are you thinking about so hard?"

"Oh, mother, I was wondering if the time would ever come when I would be a minister, and you would have an egg for your breakfast every morning."

So the years passed, and soon Gavin would be a minister. He had now sermons to prepare, and every one of them was first preached to Margaret. How solemn was his voice, how his eyes flashed, how stern were his admonitions.

"Gavin, such a sermon I never heard. The spirit of God is on you. I'm ashamed you should have me for a mother."

"God grant, mother," Gavin said, little thinking what was soon to happen, or he would have made this prayer on his knees, "that you may never be ashamed to have me for a son."

"Ah, mother," he would say wistfully, "it is not a great sermon, but do you think I'm preaching Christ? That is what I try, but I'm carried away and forget to watch myself."

"The Lord has you by the hand, Gavin, and mind, I dinna say that because you're my laddie."

"Yes you do, mother, and well I know it, and yet it does me good to hear you."

That it did him good, I who would fain have shared those days with them, am very sure. The praise that comes of love does not make us vain, but humble rather. Knowing what we are, the pride that shines in our mother's eyes, as she looks at us, is about the most pathetic thing a man has to face, but he would be a devil altogether if it did not burn some of the sin out of him.

Not long before Gavin preached for our kirk and got his call, a great event took place in the little room at Glasgow. The student appeared for the first time before his mother in his ministerial clothes. He wore the black silk hat, that was destined to become a terror to evildoers in Thrums, and I daresay he was rather puffed up about himself that day. You would probably have smiled at him.

"It's a pity I'm so little, mother," he said with a sigh.

"You're no what I would call a particularly long man," Margaret said, "but you're just the height I like."<sup>1</sup>

## THE CRY IN THE NIGHT

BEING A PASSAGE FROM "DEAD MAN'S ROCK"

BY

A. T. QUILLER-COUCH ("Q")

So the seasons passed, and we waited, till in the late summer of 1849 (my father having been away nineteen months) there came another letter to say that he was about to start for home. He had found what he sought, so he said, but could not rightly understand its value, or, indeed, make head or tail of it by himself, and dared not ask strangers to help him. Perhaps, however, when he came home, Jasper (who was such a scholar) would help him; and maybe the key would be some aid. For the rest, he had been stricken with a fever—a malady common enough in those parts—but was better, and would start in something over a week, in the *Belle Fortune*, a barque of some 650 tons register, homeward bound with a cargo of sugar, spices, and coffee, and having a crew of about eighteen hands, with, he thought, one or two passengers. The letter was full of strong hope and love, so that my mother, who trembled a little when she read about the fever, plucked up courage to smile again towards the close. The ship would be due about October, or perhaps November. So once

<sup>1</sup> Copyright in the United States by Charles Scribner's Sons.

more we had to resume our weary waiting, but this time with glad hearts, for we knew that before Christmas the days of anxiety and yearning would be over.

The long summer drew to a glorious and golden September, and so faded away in a veil of grey sky; and the time of watching was nearly done. Through September the skies had been without cloud, and the sea almost breathless, but with the coming of October came dirty weather and a strong sou'-westerly wind, that gathered day by day, until at last, upon the evening of October 11th, it broke into a gale. My mother for days had been growing more restless and anxious with the growing wind, and this evening had much ado to sit quietly and endure. I remembered that as the storm raged without and tore at the door-hinges, while the rain lashed and smote the tamarisk branches against the panes, I sat by her knee before the kitchen fire and read bits from my favourite *Holy War*, which, in the pauses of the storm, she would explain to me.

I was much put to it that night, I recollect, by the questionable morality at one point of Captain Cr den ce, who in general was my favourite hero, dividing that honour with General Boanerges for the most part, but exciting more sympathy by reason of his wound—so grievously I misread the allegory, or rather saw no allegory at all. So my mother explained it to me, though all the while, poor creature, her heart was racked with terror for *her* Mansoul, beaten, perhaps, at that moment from its body by the fury of that awful night. Then when the fable's meaning was explained, and my difficulty smoothed away, we fell to talking of father's home-coming, in

vain endeavours to cheat ourselves of the fears that rose again with every angry bellow of the tempest, and agreed that his ship could not possibly be due yet (rejoicing at this for the first time), but must, we feigned, be lying in a dead calm off the West Coast of Africa; until we almost laughed — God pardon us! — at the picture of his anxiety to be home while such a storm was raging at the doors of Lantrig. And then I listened to wonderful stories of the East Indies and the marvels that men found there, and wondered whether father would bring home a parrot, and if it would be as like Aunt Loveday as the parrot down at the Lugger Inn, at Polkimbra, and so crept upstairs to bed to dream of Captain Credence and parrots, and the Lugger Inn in the city of Mansoul, as though no fiends were shouting without and whirling sea and sky together in one devil's cauldron.

How long I slept I know not; but I woke with the glare of a candle in my eyes, to see my mother, all in white, standing by the bed, and in her eyes an awful and soul-sickening horror.

"Jasper, Jasper! wake up and listen!"

I suppose I must have been still half asleep, for I lay looking at her with dazzled sight, not rightly knowing whether this vision were real or part of my strange dreams.

"Jasper, for the love of God wake up!"

At this, so full were her words of mortal fear, I shook off my drowsiness and sat up in bed, wide awake now and staring at the strange apparition. My mother was white as death, and trembling so that the candle in her hand shook to and fro, casting wild dancing shadows on the wall behind.



"Oh, Jasper, listen, listen!"

I listened, but could hear nothing save the splashing of spray and rain upon my window, and above it the voice of the storm; now moaning as a creature in pain, now rising and growing into an angry roar whereat the whole house from chimney to base shook and shuddered, and anon sinking slowly with loud sobbings and sighings as though the anguish of a million tortured souls were borne down the blast.

"Mother, I hear nothing but the storm."

"Nothing but the storm! Oh, Jasper, are you sure you hear nothing but the storm?"

"Nothing else, mother, though that is bad enough."

She seemed relieved a little, but still trembled sadly, and caught her breath with every fresh roar. The tempest had gathered fury, and was now raging as though Judgment Day were come, and earth about to be blotted out. For some minutes we listened almost motionless, but heard nothing save the furious elements; and, indeed, it was hard to believe that any sound on earth could be audible above such a din. At last I turned to my mother and said:

"Mother dear, it is nothing but the storm. You were thinking of father, and that made you nervous. Go back to bed—it is so cold here—and try to go to sleep. What was it you thought you heard?"

"Dear Jasper, you are a good boy, and I suppose you are right, for you can hear nothing, and I can hear nothing now. But, oh, Jasper! it was so terrible, and I seemed to hear it so plainly; though I daresay it was only my—— Oh, God! there it is again! listen! listen!"

This time I heard—heard clearly and unmistakably,

and, hearing, felt the blood in my veins turn to very ice.

Shrill and distinct above the roar of the storm, which at the moment had somewhat lulled, there rose a prolonged wail, or rather shriek, as of many human voices rising slowly in one passionate appeal to the mercy of Heaven, and dying away in sobbing, shuddering despair as the wild blast broke out again with the mocking laughter of all the fiends in the pit—a cry without similitude on earth, yet surely and awfully human; a cry that rings in my ears even now, and will continue to ring until I die.

I sprang from bed, forced the window open and looked out. The wind flung a drenching shower of spray over my face and thin night-dress, then tore past up the hill. I looked and listened, but nothing could be seen or heard; no blue light, nor indeed any light at all; no cry, nor gun, nor signal of distress—nothing but the howling of the wind as it swept up from the sea, the thundering of the surf upon the beach below; and all around, black darkness and impenetrable night. The blast caught the lattice from my hand as I closed the window, and banged it furiously. I turned to look at my mother. She had fallen forward on her knees, with her arms flung across the bed, speechless and motionless, in such sort that I speedily grew possessed with an awful fear lest she should be dead. As it was, I could do nothing but call her name and try to raise the dear head that hung so heavily down. Remember that I was at this time not eight years old, and had never before seen a fainting fit, so that if a sight so like to death bewildered me it was but natural. How long

the fit lasted I cannot say, but at last, to my great joy, my mother raised her head and looked at me with a puzzled stare that gradually froze again to horror as recollection came back.

"Oh, Jasper, what could it be?—what could it be?"

Alas! I knew not, and yet seemed to know too well. The cry still rang in my ears and clamoured at my heart; while all the time a dull sense told me that it must have been a dream, and a dull desire bade me believe it so.

"Jasper, tell me—it cannot have been——"

She stopped as our eyes met, and the terrible suspicion grew and mastered us, numbing, freezing, paralysing the life within us. I tried to answer, but turned my head away. My mother sank once more upon her knees, weeping, praying, despairing, wailing, while the storm outside continued to moan and sob its passionate litany.

## POSSIBLE PETS

BEING A CHAPTER FROM "LIFE AT THE ZOO"

BY

C. J. CORNISH

THE number of animals which with ordinary tact and kindness can be tamed by man is so great, that the range of possible pets would seem almost co-extensive with the limits of the animal world. But tame tigers must, as a rule, remain a luxury for Sultans and Sarah Bernhardts, and the sociable bear be left to the

professional gentlemen who make a living from his society. We say "as a rule," not without reason, because there is hardly any limit to an Englishman's fancy for pets. The writer was requested last year to act as a friendly broker to bid for the bear which found its way so often to the London Police Courts after being exhibited before the Queen at Windsor. The would-be purchaser was a worthy butcher before whose shop the bear was being exhibited, while the writer heard its history from the genial and dirty foreigner who owned it. "Sir," said the butcher, "excuse the liberty, but would you kindly ask that Frenchman what he will take for the bear?" "Certainly," we replied, "if you will say why you want it; is it for professional purposes?"—for the bear was fat. "Oh, no! I should not think of such a thing," said the butcher. "I want him for a pet." "Very well; how high will you go?" we asked. "Up to ten pounds," the butcher replied. But though we did our best, the owner would not accept less than eight hundred francs, to the great disappointment of the would-be purchaser. What is required for an every-day pet is that it shall be beautiful and intelligent; that it shall neither be too large nor too delicate; and, if a bird, that it shall sing or talk—preferably both. The two first requirements will not go far to limit the choice. Beauty of form and harmony of colour are the almost inseparable attributes of that physical perfection which the natural life of animals demands; and he would be a rash man who classed any of the more highly organised animals as "stupid" without trial

But there are "diversities of gifts," and the

exquisite beauty of the silky little chinchilla must be held to compensate for the want of the lively cleverness of the coatimundi or the Capuchin monkeys. The limits set by size and constitution are the main consideration in the choice of pets. Yet even so the possible range is very great, and might well extend far beyond the species which form the main body of those usually seen in this country. To begin with our native animals, who has seen a tame hare? Most school-boys have kept tame rabbits by the dozen — singularly uninteresting pets when shut up all day in a box munching cabbage-stalks — and generally turned over to younger sisters in favour of a terrier puppy after brief possession. Yet even after the experience of tame hares so charmingly told by Cowper, the most domestic of poets, the hare is neglected as a pet. Yet its form and fur are beautiful, and so far as the writer has been able to judge of this, perhaps one of the least carefully observed, except for persecution, of our wild animals, the hare is a clever, affectionate creature, as far above the rabbit in the scale of intelligence as it is in physique. Last spring, after a late fall of snow, an old hare brought her leverets from the hill, and hid them in a straw-stack near a farm, and remained constantly near them all day, coming to them regularly as soon as the twilight made it safe. They are bold as well as affectionate, and have been known to drive off a hawk which was carrying away a young one, springing up and striking the bird as it flew low above the ground; and their attachment to locality is so great, that even if kept at large, they would probably not leave their owner's grounds

A charming little foreign pet for the house is the suricate, or meer-cat. This pretty creature, which, if we remember rightly, was among the number of Frank Buckland's animal companions, is an active and vivacious little fellow, some ten inches long, with greenish-brown fur, large bright eyes, a short pointed nose and dainty paws, which, like the squirrel's or the racoon's, are used as hands, to hold, to handle, and to ask for more. Eloquent in supplication, tenacious in retention, the suricate's paws are expressive, plaintive, and wholly irresistible. The creature is made for a pet, and is so affectionate to its master that it can undergo any degree of "spoiling" without injury to its temper. A larger, more beautiful, and most charming creature, not unlike the suricate in some respects, though in no way related to it, is the brown opossum from Tasmania. "Sooty Phalanger" is the elegant name given to it by naturalists; but except when the specimen kept by the writer discovered that a chimney made a good substitute for a hollow tree for its midday sleep, there was nothing in its appearance to justify the scientific adjective. The fur is of the richest dark brown, and covers its prehensile tail like a fur boa. Its head is small, with a pink nose and very large brown eyes; and it has a "compound" hand, with the claws on its fingers, and an almost human and clawless thumb, with the aid of which it can hold a wine-glass, or eat jam out of a teaspoon. That owned by the writer was, without exception, the most fearless and affectionate pet he has ever known. In the evening, when it was most lively, it would climb on to the shoulder of any of its visitors, and take any

food given it. It had a mania for cleanliness, always "washing" its hands after taking food, or even after running across the room, and was always anxious to do the same office by the hands of anyone who fed it. It made friends with the dogs, and would "wash" their faces for them, catching hold of an old setter's nose with its sharp little claws, to hold it steady while it licked its face. The staircase and banisters furnished a gymnasium for exercise in the winter, and in summer it could be trusted among the trees in the garden. This opossum is becoming scarce, owing to the demand for its fur; but there is little doubt that specimens could still be bought for a moderate sum. That owned by the writer cost three pounds. The American grey squirrel is a common and hardy species, which becomes very tame, though scarcely so pretty as our red squirrel; and the South American coatis, especially the small kind, are most amusing pets; though, like the mongoose, they need to be kept warm. All the coatis are sociable, lively creatures, quite omnivorous, and with as many odd tricks as a monkey. The mongoose, that "familiar" of Indian households, has such a natural bias for human society, that, according to Mr. Kipling, it will often come into a house from the jungle, and voluntarily enrol itself among the members of the family. It is a slim, active little animal, varying from a foot to nearly two feet in length, of a curious mottled silver-grey colour, and so amazingly rapid in its movements that its victory over the cobra is not surprising. Provided that it is kept warm in winter, it will live well in an English home, and loses none of those domestic qualities which make it such a

favourite in India. The marmot and the viscacha, or prairie-dog, are amusing little fellows, and if allowed the use of a small enclosure in which the marmots can burrow and make hay for the winter, and the viscachas make their "collections" of curiosities, either species would, no doubt, add to the interest of an English country house. But as both the marmot and the viscacha hibernate in winter, their owner must be prepared for their disappearance underground from Christmas until March.

There is only one monkey which we can thoroughly recommend as an indoor pet, the beautiful and intelligent little Capuchin. The marmosets, even more beautiful and equally pleasing, are too delicate for our climate, and die of colds and coughs after the first fogs of winter. But the lively little Capuchins may be kept for years in an English house; and no monkey approaches their good temper and pretty winning ways. They all have good round heads, with black fur on the top and light brown on the cheeks. Some have pinkish faces, and others dark-brown skins, with eyes like brown jewels. Their faces are most expressive, and seldom still, for they take deep and abiding interest in everything in or about their cages. One kept in a large house in Leicestershire had learnt to put out burning paper, which it did most adroitly by beating it with its hands or knocking it against the floor. Another, which was kept at the Zoo, would, if it got a match, collect a heap of straw, strike the match, light its bonfire, and dance round it. This dangerous accomplishment led to its removal from the cages on Saturdays and Bank-holidays, when the crowd makes it difficult to keep a watch



on its movements. The Capuchin is so small, so pretty, and so clever, that it seems to embody all the good and none of the bad points of monkey nature.

No one who has seen pumas when kindly treated in captivity can doubt the justice of the impression that these friendly and beautiful cats at once produce, that they *must* be suited for pets and companions. The general verdict of South Americans as to their gentleness and natural liking for man, even when wild on the Pampas, is given in some detail in a later chapter on Animal Temper. There was at least one puma kept as a pet in this country, by Captain Marshall, the owner of a unique private menagerie at Marlow, on the Thames. Reports of a gentleman, "with a tame lioness by his side," having been seen sitting by a lock gate on the Thames, evidently pointed to the taming, not of a lioness, which, however domesticated among those whom it knows, would be too dangerous and uncertain a creature to take abroad, but of a puma, which, being neither striped nor spotted, would be at once described as a "lioness" by the ordinary "man in a boat." This was the case, and the following is Captain Marshall's short account of his late pet, for unfortunately it died of liver-complaint before the writer could ask to make its acquaintance. "My big full-grown puma," writes its master, "was as tame as a cat. It was kept for months on a chain and collar, and could be led about. It would rest its head on my lap, and I could pull it about as much as I liked. I also had a baby one, but she was *not* tame." The lovely snow leopard, which came to the Zoo in 1894, was a lady's pet. It had always been fed upon cooked meat, and was

perfectly tame. The writer has patted it as it lay in its box in the Lion House, and it merely looked up exactly like a sleepy grey Angora cat. Yet this was a full-grown leopard, in perfect condition and health, living in the next cage to one of the black variety, which was almost the wildest creature in the menagerie.

Those who possess an aviary may be interested to hear that at the Zoo, blackcaps, whitethroats, garden warblers, and nightingales, all birds of passage, are living in excellent health through the winter; and one nightingale was singing on 29th December, but the song, though very beautiful, was not a true nightingale's note, but largely borrowed from that of the bulbul in the next aviary, the bird being a young one, caught in the autumn. It is evident, from the experiment at the Zoo, that our summer warblers may be kept as pets; but the bird of all others suited for the aviary, but neglected as a rule in England, is the bulbul. The Persian variety has the finest song, but the Indian is an even prettier bird, and sings exquisitely. In appearance, the bulbuls are not unlike the Bohemian waxwing, with a black conical top-knot, cinnamon-coloured backs, red-and-white or yellow-and-white cheeks, and white breasts, with some bright colour near the tail. The note is most liquid and beautiful, and the bird has a pretty habit of varying the volume of the sound, singing loudly in the open, and almost whispering its song to its master or mistress if confined in a room. We might do worse than follow the example of the Persians, and make the bulbul our favourite cage-bird, instead of the canary.

## THE BONFIRE

BEING AN INCIDENT FROM "DREAM DAYS"

BY

KENNETH GRAHAME

OCTOBER was mellowing fast, and with it the year itself, full of tender hints, in woodland and hedgerow, of a course well-nigh completed. From all sides that still afternoon you caught the quick breathing and sob of the runner nearing the goal. Preoccupied and possessed, Selina had strayed down the garden and out into the pasture beyond, where, on a bit of rising ground that dominated the garden on one side and the downs with the old coach-road on the other, she had cast herself down to chew the cud of fancy. There she was presently joined by Harold, breathless and very full of his latest grievance.

"I asked him not to," he burst out. "I said if he'd only please wait a bit and Edward would be back soon, and it couldn't matter to *him*, and the pig wouldn't mind, and Edward'd be pleased and everybody'd be happy. But he just said he was very sorry, but bacon didn't wait for nobody. So I told him he was a regular beast, and then I came away. And—and I b'lieve they're doing it now!"

"Yes, he's a beast," agreed Selina, absently. She had forgotten all about the pig-killing. Harold kicked away a freshly thrown-up mole-hill, and prodded down the hole with a stick. From the direction of Farmer Larkin's demesne came a long-drawn note:

of sorrow, a thin cry and appeal, telling that the stout soul of a black Berkshire pig was already faring down the stony track to Hades.

"D'you know what day it is?" said Selina presently, in a low voice, looking far away before her.

Harold did not appear to know, nor yet to care. He had laid open his mole-run for a yard or so, and was still grubbing at it absorbedly.

"It's Trafalgar Day," went on Selina, trancedly; "Trafalgar Day—and nobody cares!"

Something in her tone told Harold that he was not behaving quite becomingly. He didn't exactly know in what manner; still, he abandoned his mole-hunt for a more courteous attitude of attention.

"Over there," resumed Selina—she was gazing out in the direction of the old highroad—"over there the coaches used to go by. Uncle Thomas was telling me about it the other day. And the people used to watch for 'em coming, to tell the time by, and p'r'aps to get their parcels. And one morning—they wouldn't be expecting anything different—one morning, first there would be a cloud of dust, as usual, and then the coach would come racing by, and *then* they would know! For the coach would be dressed in laurel, all laurel from stem to stern! And the coachman would be wearing laurel, and the guard would be wearing laurel; and then they would know, then *they* would know!"

Harold listened in respectful silence. He would much rather have been hunting the mole, who must have been a mile away by this time if he had his wits about him. But he had all the natural instincts of a gentleman; of whom it is one of the principal

marks, if not the complete definition, never to show signs of being bored.

Selina rose to her feet, and paced the turf restlessly with a short quarter-deck walk.

"Why can't we *do* something?" she burst out presently. "*He*—he did everything—why can't we do anything for him?"

"*Who* did everything?" inquired Harold, meekly. It was useless wasting further longings on that mole. Like the dead, he travelled fast.

"Why, Nelson, of course," said Selina, shortly, still looking restlessly around for help or suggestion.

"But he's—he's *dead*, isn't he?" asked Harold, slightly puzzled.

"What's that got to do with it?" retorted his sister, resuming her caged-lion promenade.

Harold was somewhat taken aback. In the case of the pig, for instance, whose last outcry had now passed into stillness, he had considered the chapter as finally closed. Whatever innocent mirth the holidays might hold in store for Edward, that particular pig, at least, would not be a contributor. And now he was given to understand that the situation had not materially changed! He would have to revise his ideas, it seemed. Sitting up on end, he looked towards the garden for assistance in the task. Thence, even as he gazed, a tiny column of smoke rose straight up into the still air. The gardener had been sweeping that afternoon, and now, an unconscious priest, was offering his sacrifice of autumn leaves to the calm-eyed goddess of changing hues and chill forebodings who was moving slowly about the land that golden afternoon. Harold was up and

off in a moment, forgetting Nelson, forgetting the pig, the mole, the Larkin betrayal, and Selina's strange fever of conscience. Here was fire, real fire, to play with, and that was even better than messing with water, or remodelling the plastic surface of the earth. Of all the toys the world provides for right-minded persons, the original elements rank easily the first.

But Selina sat on where she was, her chin on her fists; and her fancies whirled and drifted, here and there, in curls and eddies, along with the smoke she was watching. As the quick-footed dusk of the short October day stepped lightly over the garden, little red tongues of fire might be seen to leap and vanish in the smoke. Harold, anon stoking vigorously, was discernible only at fitful intervals. It was another sort of smoke that the inner eye of Selina was looking upon—a smoke that hung in sullen banks round the masts and the hulls of the fighting ships; a smoke from beneath which came thunder and the crash and the splinter-rip, the shout of the boarding-party, the choking sob of the gunner stretched by his gun; a smoke from out of which at last she saw, as through a riven pall, the radiant spirit of the Victor, crowned with the coronal of a perfect death, leap in full assurance up into the ether that Immortals breathe. The dusk was glooming towards darkness when she rose and moved slowly down towards the beckoning fire; something of the priestess in her stride, something of the devotee in the set purpose of her eye.

The leaves were well alight by this time, and Harold

had just added an old furze bush, which flamed and crackled stirringly.

"Go 'n' get some more sticks," ordered Selina, "and shavings, 'n' chunks of wood, 'n' anything you can find. Look here—in the kitchen-garden there's a pile of old pea-sticks. Fetch as many as you can carry, and then go back and bring some more!"

"But I say——" began Harold, amazedly, scarce knowing his sister, and with a vision of a frenzied gardener, pea-stickless and threatening retribution.

"Go and fetch 'em quick!" shouted Selina, stamping with impatience.

Harold ran off at once, true to the stern system of discipline in which he had been nurtured. But his eyes were like round O's, and as he ran he talked fast to himself, in evident disorder of mind.

The pea-sticks made a rare blaze, and the fire, no longer smouldering sullenly, leapt up and began to assume the appearance of a genuine bonfire. Harold, awed into silence at first, began to jump round it with shouts of triumph. Selina looked on grimly, with knitted brow; she was not yet fully satisfied. "Can't you get any more sticks?" she said presently. "Go and hunt about. Get some old hampers and matting and things out of the tool-house. Smash up that old cucumber frame Edward shoved you into, the day we were playing scouts and Mohicans. Stop a bit! Hooray! I know. You come along with me."

Hard by there was a hot-house, Aunt Eliza's special pride and joy, and even grimly approved of by the gardener. At one end, in an out-house adjoining, the necessary firing was stored; and to this sacred fuel, of which we were strictly forbidden to touch a stick,

Selina went straight. Harold followed obediently, prepared for any crime after that of the pea-sticks, but pinching himself to see if he were really awake.

"You bring some coals," said Selina briefly, without any palaver or pro-and-con discussion. "Here's a basket. *I'll manage the faggots!*"

In a very few minutes there was little doubt about its being a genuine bonfire and no paltry makeshift. Selina, a Mænad now, hatless and tossing disordered locks, all the dross of the young lady purged out of her, stalked around the pyre of her own purloining, or prodded it with a pea-stick. And as she prodded she murmured at intervals, "*I knew* there was something we could do! It isn't much—but still it's *something!*"

The gardener had gone home to his tea. Aunt Eliza had driven out for hers a long way off, and was not expected back till quite late, and this far end of the garden was not overlooked by any windows. So the Tribute blazed on merrily unchecked. Villagers far away, catching sight of the flare, muttered something about "them young devils at their tricks again," and trudged on beer-wards. Never a thought of what day it was, never a thought for Nelson, who preserved their honest pint-pots, to be paid for in honest pence, and saved them from *litres* and decimal coinage. Nearer at hand, frightened rabbits popped up and vanished with a flick of white tails; scared birds fluttered among the branches, or sped across the glade to quieter sleeping-quarters; but never a bird nor a beast gave a thought to the hero to whom they owed it that each year their little homes of horsehair, wool, or moss, were safe stablished 'neath



the flap of the British flag; and that Game Laws, quietly permanent, made *la chasse* a terror only to their betters. No one seemed to know, nor to care, nor to sympathise. In all the ecstasy of her burnt-offering and sacrifice, Selina stood alone.

And yet—not quite alone! For, as the fire was roaring at its best, certain stars stepped delicately forth on the surface of the immensity above, and peered down doubtfully—with wonder at first, then with interest, then with recognition, with a start of glad surprise. *They* at least knew all about it, *they* understood. Among *them* the Name was a daily familiar word, his story was a part of the music to which they swung, himself was their fellow and their mate and comrade. So they peeped, and winked, and peeped again, and called to their laggard brothers to come quick and see.

## FOR THE TRAINING OF BIROO

BEING A STORY CHAPTER FROM "THE TAMING  
OF THE JUNGLE"

BY

C. W. DOYLE

"AH, small villain, budmash! must I send thee back to Nyagong, thee and thy dog, to learn respect for thy betters? The Thanadar's son hath the ordering of thee, and thou hast beaten him,—toba, toba!"

"My father," replied Biroo respectfully to Ram

Deen, "Mohun Lal took my kite, and when I strove to hold mine own he smote me, whereon I pulled his hair; and 'twas no fault of mine that it lacked strength and remained in my hand. So he set his dog on me; but Hasteen slew it. Wherein have I offended, my father?"

And the Thanadar laughed, saying, "Ram Deen, Mohun Lal but received his due." To the "defendant in the case" he said, "Get thee to sleep, Biroo; and be brave and strong; so will Nana Debi reward thee." Then turning to those who sat round the fire, he went on, "Brothers, 'tis late, and I would have speech with Ram Deen. Ye may take your leave."

When they were by themselves, the Thanadar spoke. "The man-child waxeth fierce and strong, my old friend; 'twere well he were restrained. He will be wealthy by thy favour, and the favour of Nyagong, when he cometh to man's estate, and 'twere pity that he should lack courtesy when he is a man grown."

"Thanadar ji, thou art his father as much as I am. Thou shouldst correct him with strokes whenas I am on the road and carrying the queen's mail."

"Blows but inure to hardness, and — Gunga knoweth!—little Biroo is hard already. Why dost thou not give up the service of the queen, and——" He paused, and after a while asked, "What didst thou receive from Captain Barfield?"

"The gun thou hast seen, Thanadar ji; but from his mem-sahib five hundred rupees, a timepiece of gold, and whatsoever I may want hereafter. The money lieth in the hands of Moti Ram, the great mahajun (banker) of Naini Tal."

“Wah! Ram Deen, thou art thyself rich enough to be a mahajun. Consider, too, the kindness bestowed by Nyagong on Biroo at thy asking—two hundred rupees and over, and much merchandise. Leave the road, my friend, and put thy money out at usury. A woman in thy hut to cook thy evening meal, and mend Biroo’s ways, were not amiss. Eh? The daughters of the Terai are very fair, as thou knowest, coach-wan·ji.”

“The road hath been father and mother to me, Thanadar sahib, since I lost my Buldeo, who knew not his mother; so I may not leave it. And when I think of Bheem Dass, bunnia and usurer of the village whereof I was potter three years ago, and whom ye found dead on the road the day I brought in the mail, and was made driver, as thou rememberest, I may not live by harassing the poor and the widow and fatherless. God forbid! As for women,—they be like butterflies that flit from flower to flower; perchance, if I could find a woman who cared not to gossip at the village well, and had eyes and thoughts for none save her husband, I might—but I must be about my business on the road, and I have no time for the seeking of such a woman. Wah! I have not, even as yet, tried the gun Barfield sahib gave me.”

Soon afterwards, by an alteration of the service, Ram Deen brought the mail to Kaladoongie in the early afternoon, and availed himself of the opportunity thus afforded of rambling about during the rest of the day in the jungle with Biroo and Hasteen, in search of small game.

One day they came upon a half-grown fawn, at which Ram Deen let fly with both barrels; but as

his gun was loaded with small shot only, the deer bounded away apparently unhurt, with Hasteen in hot pursuit, whilst Ram Deen and Biroo followed with what haste they could.

Presently, they could hear the baying of the great dog and the shrill cries of a woman in distress. Directed by these sounds, they crossed the road that leads to Naini Tal, and, scrambling up the bank and over a low stone wall, they found themselves in a neglected garden, in the middle of which was a grass hut, whence issued the cries that had quickened their steps. They arrived just in time, for Hasteen had almost dug himself into the hut.

Calling off the dog, Ram Deen hastened to allay the fears of the woman in the hut, who was still giving voice to her distress in the Padhani patois. "The dog will not harm thee; see, I have tied him with my waistband to a tree."

"Who art thou?" asked the woman. The tones of her voice, when she spoke, were exceedingly soft and pleasant, and made one long to look upon the face of the speaker.

"I am Ram Deen, the driver of the mail cart, and well known in Kaladoongie."

"I have heard of thee and thy doings, and will come forth. But the dog (Nana Debi, was there ever such a dog!—he almost slew my fawn), art thou sure he cannot harm us?"

"Kali Mai twist my joints, if he be not well secured."

Whereupon the door of the hut was opened a few inches. Having satisfied herself that all was as Ram Deen had said, the young woman came out of the hut with one arm about the fawn.

She was a Padhani, and in her early womanhood. The simple kilt she wore allowed her shapely ankles to be seen, and her bodice well expressed the charms of her youthful figure. Ram Deen thought her eyes were not less beautiful than the fawn's.

After salaaming to him, she looked at her pet. "Oh, sahib, she bleeds,—my Ganda bleeds!" she exclaimed, pointing to a slender streak of red on the fawn's flank.

"Belike some thorn tore her skin as she fled," said Ram Deen; but he knew that at least one shot from his gun had taken effect.

"'Tis a sore hurt, Coach-wan sahib. Will she die?"

"Nay, little one, 'tis nought. See!" and with a wisp of grass Ram Deen wiped the blood from the fawn's skin.

"But the dog, coach-wan—thou wilt not permit him to fright my Ganda again?"

"Of a surety, not." Then, with a hand on the fawn's head, he rebuked Hasteen, saying, "Villain, the jackals shall pursue thee if thou huntest here again!" And Hasteen hung his head, putting his tail between his legs; and the young girl knew that Ganda was safe thereafter from the great dog.

As they talked together, a very decrepit old man appeared at the door of the hut; after peering at Ram Deen from under his hand, he spoke in the flat, toneless voice of a deaf man: "Tumbaku, Provider of the Poor, give me tumbaku."

Ram Deen put his pouch of dried tobacco-leaf in the old man's hand, and looked inquiringly at the young woman.

"It is my grandfather, and he is deaf and nearly blind—and a sore affliction. Give back his tumbaku to the sahib, dada," she said in a louder voice to the old man.

"Nay, nay, let him keep it!" said Ram Deen; then after a pause, and by way of excuse for staying a little longer, he inquired the old man's name.

"Hera Lal, Coach-wan sahib, our kinsman is Thapa Sing, of Serya Tal, who was accounted rich, and planted this garden and these fruit trees many years ago. We stay here by his leave in the winter time, to keep the deer and wild hog out. My name is Tara, and I sell firewood to Gunga Ram the sweet-meat vendor."

Whilst she was speaking, Biroo had approached the fawn with a handful of grass.

"Is this the little one they say ye found on the Bore bridge, sahib?" inquired the young Padhani.

Ram Deen nodded affirmatively.

"Poor child!" she exclaimed, and, moved by a sudden impulse of pity, she knelt beside Biroo, and smoothing the hair from his face she put a marigold behind his ear.

Next day, after he had delivered the mail, Ram Deen, making a bundle of his best clothes, started off into the jungle. When he was out of sight of the village, he donned a snowy tunic and a scarlet turban, and encased his feet in a pair of red, hide-sewn shoes. When Tara, on her way to the bazaar with a load of firewood, met him soon after, she thought she had never seen anyone so bravely attired, and stepped off the path to make room for him to pass.

"Toba, toba!" he exclaimed; "it maketh my head

ache to see the load thou bearest. Gunga Ram will, doubtless, give thee not less than eight annas for the firewood."

"Nay, Coach-wan sahib, Gunga Ram is just, and besides giving me the market price—two annas—he often bestoweth on me a handful of sweetmeats."

"Thou shalt sell no more wood to Gunga Ram. He is base, and his father is a dog. Set thy load at my door, here is the price thereof," and Ram Deen laid an eight-anna piece in her palm. Before she could recover from her astonishment he said, "The fawn Ganda, is her hurt healed?"

"It is well with her. And what of Biroo, sahib?"

"He is a budmash, Tara, and I repent me of befriending him."

"Nay, Coach-wan sahib, he is but little, and hath no mother."

"That is the evil of it," said Ram Deen, leaving her abruptly.

When Tara returned to her home that evening, she noticed the footprints of a man's shoes in the dust in front of the hut; her grandfather, looking at her cunningly, smoked sweetened tobacco that was well flavoured, and the clay bowl of his hookah was new and was gaily painted.

A similar scene was enacted on the jungle path the next day, and many days in succession, and the tale of Biroo's iniquities grew at each recital. Every day there was some fresh villainy of his to relate, and each day Tara's grandfather waxed in affluence, which culminated one day in a new blanket and a small purse with money in it.

"Tara," said Ram Deen one day, "put down thy

load; I have bad tidings to tell thee concerning Biroo. He and Hasteen killed a milch-goat to-day belonging to the Thanadar."

"'Twas the dog's doing, Ram Deen."

"Nay, Biroo is the older budmash, and planneth all the villainies. To-morrow I must pay the Thanadar three rupees and eight annas, or Hasteen will be slain and Biroo beaten with a shoe by the Thanadar's chuprassi."

"Biroo shall not be beaten for a matter of three or four rupees, sahib. Lo, here is the money," and Tara, taking a small purse from a tiny pocket in her bodice, held it out to him.

"Nay, listen further!" exclaimed Ram Deen, holding up his hands; "thou knowest I am wifeless, and I might have the best and fairest woman in the Terai for my wife; but she liketh not Biroo, and will not share my hut because of him. Verily, I shall return him to the men of Nyagong."

"Thou art, doubtless, entitled to the best and the fairest wife in the Terai," said Tara, with a sudden catch in her voice; "but Biroo goeth not back to Nyagong as long as our hut standeth and as long as Gunga Ram, who is a just man and a generous, will pay me two annas each day for wood." She turned away her face, so that Ram Deen should not see the tears that suddenly filled her eyes.

"'Tis well, Tara; thou shalt have him, but thou must beat him every day, and often, to make an upright man of him."

"Nana Debi wither the hand that striketh him! He is not a dog to be taught with stripes." Then, after a pause, she went on. "And the—the woman



who is to be the best and fairest wife in the Terai,  
—what manner of woman is she?"

"She is about thine age."

"Yes?"

"And as tall as thou art."

"Proceed."

"Her voice is soft and sweet as a blackbird's, and her eyes are like a fawn's. Her name is——"

"Well, what is her name?"

"'Tis the most beautiful name that a woman can bear. Nay, how can I tell thee her name if thou wilt not look at me?"

When she had turned her eyes on him, he put his hands on her shoulders, saying, "Her name is Tara, Star of the Terai."

And Tara put her head on his breast, and was very happy.

"Thou must beat Biroo, Beloved, or he will be hanged."

"Thou wouldst have been hanged, budmash, hadst thou been motherless and beaten by strangers. Biroo's mother will make him a better man than thou art, O Beater of Babes."

"And thou takest me for love?"

"Nay, coach-wan ji, but for the training of Biroo."

## THE WHEAT FAIRY

BEING A CHAPTER FROM "OPEN TRAILS"

BY

JANEY CANUCK

Allons! Whoever you are, come travel with me!  
WHITMAN.

SOMEWHERE in Saskatchewan, about fifty miles from Prince Albert, there is a farm of 2240 statute acres. I have not been able to figure it out whether it belongs to us or whether we belong to it. "Gentleman farming" does not pay in Canada. It is as extravagant as putting butter on bacon. A race-horse, an automobile, or even an adding-machine, are modestly-priced pleasures compared with it. This is particularly true when you try to farm five hundred miles from your base of operations. It gives you ample opportunity to observe that the golden sheaf and the golden fleece are by no means synonymous expressions.

I mention this to the Padre, but he wholly disagrees with me. He always does. He points out that money spent in sod-breaking, wire-fencing, granaries, and so on, and so on, and so on, goes to what he calls "the capital account." He is probably right. Nevertheless, I believe capital accounts kill more people in western Canada than all other causes combined, and I have no doubt a post-mortem examination would disclose the words graven on their hearts just as "Calais" was on Queen Mary's. It is the skeleton in the closet that is hard to fatten. an

When I am at a loss for inspiration, I always find myself making nice calculations on the fair sheet of my manuscript, in the which I multiply the number of bushels per acre with the price per bushel, and subtract from the product the expenses of harvesting and marketing the same; the result of which calculations causes direful dismay even to me who am a lover of lost causes. The trouble with money is that it cannot be spent twice.

My lord and master is superintending the loading of our grain on cars—when he is not wiring for quotations, worrying the station agent about more cars, or trying to figure out why farm horses and farm hands move so slowly. It relieves his feelings to tell me all about it at least a dozen times a day. Just now he is nailing in a grain door which has not been properly fastened. He is fairly seething with wrath, and says these teamsters have plenty of time in which to do nothing. Old Duncan Maclean is standing by, telling him how it ought to be done. When you do anything in the North, everyone gives you advice. He does not see the green glint in the Padre's eye that I do, else he would discreetly retire.

Old Duncan, who is sixty years old and somewhat more, tells me it is "a saft day." He insists on shaking hands when we meet. His is not a white hand, nor a "saft" hand, but it is kindly. We sit on the edge of the station platform and have a harmless talk about mallards, the crop, the scarcity of cars, and the merits of gasoline engines as compared with steam for farming purposes. Also, we tear the Government to tatters. Old Duncan tells me that eastern manufacturers send their poorest articles to

the West and charge first-class prices for them. In his new wagon the spokes rattle and the tyres are loose because the wood has not been properly seasoned. His complaint is not without grounds. This is a woeful mistake on the part of the manufacturers. They are fluttering the goose and presently the golden eggs will be kept at home. Old Duncan is going to have the scalp of a gentleman with the unkind name of Buggins from whom he bought the wagon.

Our conversation turns on a young Englishman who is in the village spending his remittance money. Two other Englishmen are keeping close in his wake, for the youth is evidently "standing treat." They have been of a lower social status in England, and are doubtless telling him the colonials are "hup-starts." He is very, very drunk, and looks ill. Old Duncan says he is an unlicked cub, but I have an idea he has been licked too much and too often. If we Canadians err on the side of making our children independent to the point of impudence, the English go to the other extreme. They break their butterflies on a wheel. This youth has likely been entirely dominated by his nurse and mother in earlier life and, later, by his father and tutor, so that all his fibre has been rubbed away and nothing left but the polish. All life's covers have been beaten for him, and he has probably never once had to exercise initiative in anything that mattered. He is a weakling and a ne'er-do-well. Poor lad! my heart goes out to him with an exceeding pity.

Assuredly there should be a great mother in the world whose care would be the mending of human lives and the wiping away of sin-scars. Old Duncan

says there is such, and that many have found her in this new Northland—that all could who cared to seek her out. But it is un-Canadian and unjust to draw undue attention to the remittance men who come out to have a “go” at farming, for they are an infinitely small proportion among the intensely vital Britons who come annually to Canada and who, every day, are happily demonstrating that they are the right men in the right place. Besides, it is only fair to acknowledge that all remittance men are not bad oats gone to seed. Once in a blue moon a man learns his lesson and makes good. I know several who have settled down in properest fashion, with work to wife, and bid fair so to live till death them part.

The Canadian who puts up the notice “No Englishman need apply” is an ill-conditioned puppy. I have never seen such notices, so they must be comparatively scarce, but I have heard of them. It is quite within an employer’s province privately to discriminate concerning workmen for, assuredly, he who pays may call the tune; but he has no right to be grossly offensive to his fellow-men. I delight in that Englishman who, on seeing such a notice, raised his eyebrows and said, “By Jove! Copied off the gates of hell.”

And Old Duncan and I talked about the so-called “American invasion.” My preceptor says the Americans are, by all odds, our best settlers in that they bring both wealth and experience to the country. They adapt themselves quickly too, our climatic conditions being almost identical with those of the western States. The Americans, he says, are loyal to Canada for they appreciate the liberty of action,

stability of law, excellent police protection, and the wide opportunities for accumulating wealth, which are to be found on this side the border line. And why shouldn't they be when we are the same people in everything but the matter of a piece of coloured bunting? I know that we are kinsfolk, because we make faces at them. When we cease to be, we will discard our family manners and be more polite, as is our wont with strangers.

Every day I explore a new trail, for the country is seamed with them. In the North, they are vastly appreciative of the straight line. The streets, the sections, the house-fronts, the wires, the railways, are without a shadow of turning, but the blessed trails are an exception; they wander free as the air. You do not find trails here; you lose them.

One soon wearies of a straight road that keeps discreetly between fences. But a trail lures one on and on just to see what is round the next bend. And yet the real pleasure is not so much in what one sees as in the things one feels.

I try to open up my locked senses that I may take in life. I would be free to the sky and the air and the sun, until I feel at one with them. It is not easy, though, for I am ever conscious of leaden feet, but, sometimes, a good god catches me up into some place that is heaven for aught I know. In it, just to breathe is a delight. And when I have no mind to walk, I rest me under the trees and marvel greatly how people can ever worry about tariff bills, free grace, or the North Pole.

A herd of cattle are grazing near by in a fat, good pasture. They eat and eat, and never seem satisfied.

These cud-chewers, like some folk with souls, make hay while the sun shines and eat it in the dark. From the distance comes the palpitant cry of a coyote, with all the shrillness of a bugle blast. It is a cry neither beastly nor human—a wordless, throat-tearing howl, that might make you believe the owner thereof was a terrible, much-to-be-shunned fellow, whereas he is a faint-hearted weakling who is merely advertising his shabbily-filled stomach.

The Pilgrim Fathers tell how, when lost in the woods, they were terrified by the roar of “lyons” and had met wolves that “sat on their tayles and grinned” at them. Dear souls! No wonder they mistook the coyote’s ungente voice for that of a lion.

And somewhere, not far away, a bird is fluting a madcap madrigal in a sweet abandonment of song. For a little time she is quiet but, once and again, she breaks into a rollicking song of ecstatic joy. It is almost a spring song. I wonder why she is so glad. I trow *he* has come home again, and she is unpacking his valise. This must be it!

In the quietude that the trees afford, it is sometimes given to us to be curiously a-chime with Nature’s mood. In spite of our caustic minds and calloused souls, Nature holds us in tether. She is the great mother from whose apron-strings we are never wholly free. This is why in wild-wood pleasaunces the fancy dallies with delirious themes! This is why one sometimes gets too near Eden and catches a glimpse of the flaming sword.

Out of the lacy shadows, with glad feet and blithesome, come the little fairy folk of the Northlands to be a while with me. (I always wear a bit

of green to coax the fairies.) From the black, winding ways of the spruce come brown, Bacchic girls, cone-crowned and love-drowsy, to weave an olden dance with wave-like motions. A panting dryad, deliciously afraid, flies from an eager faun that is half wolf and half man. She is the dryad of the white woodways where the birch and cotton-woods grow. A revel rout of wild-footed nymphs from the prairies trapeze across the sward. With saucy quips and cranks, and many sweet pretends, they advance, retreat, and wave me kisses. Frolic beauties are they, sired of the wolf-men. I could catch them if I tried.

This lightsome little romp blew in to me on a wanton wind. She is a coquette to the core. Her dress is of emerald green and shining gold, for she is the wheat fairy. You may see the brush of the sun in her hair. It is copper-coloured, and when she shakes it free a red rust falls on the grain. Of all the fairies she is most fickle, and if you so much as breathe a word against her, she will bid the pixies fling cut-worms and grasshoppers on your fields. These be wayward pixies of sibilant, sly tongue, and they sing to me elfin songs. Impish are they and of wandering mind, and it is well known that at the hour of the owl they go forth on wilding bronchos to do their little deeds of ill.

In the train of the wheat fairy there is also a grim ogre, who is never far away. His name is Hangman Hail, and his joy is to twist the heads off the stalks when they are near to harvest. To placate the little wheat woman, you must from the day of All Fools till the night of the full moon in August, pray only



to the elements, for the sun is her father, the soil her mother, and her nurse is the rain.

The willow pipes of the northern genii have a spell in them, for always they play to your tune however tangled it may be. What do they play? A boding tune, a merry song, a plaintive minor, a trailing, dreamy measure, a call of passionate madness.

No, no; you are quite wrong. 'Tis not my own mind's fantasy. 'Tis not a home-sickness of the soul. Listen! and even now you may hear their luring, sense-stealing whispers, and this is what they say:

Come and drink our golden wine  
And sip our silver dew;  
They are outpoured, Lady Mine,  
Just for you.

We have come from far and near,  
Bearing tokens new;  
They stand waiting, Lady Dear,  
Each for you.

Come with us to By-and-By,  
Where the tears are few;  
There's a heaven, Lady High,  
All for you.

## THE LARK AND THE CUCKOO

BEING A CHAPTER FROM "LONG WILL"

BY

FLORENCE CONVERSE

THERE were a many singers on the hill-top. They twittered in the gorse, they whistled from the old hawthorn tree, amid the white may; they sprang to heaven, shaking off melody in their flight, and one, russet-clad, lay at his length against the green slope, murmuring English in his throat.

"'Twas in a May morning," he said, "'Twas in a May morning,"—and he loitered over the words and drew out the "morwening" very long and sweet. Then, because there was a singing mote of a lark in the misty blue above him, his own song dropped back into his breast, and he waited.

He was young and lank, and his hair was yellow-red. He followed the lark up into the bright heaven with wide, unblinking eyes. The bird fell to earth; somewhere unseen a cuckoo chanted. Three sheep on the brow of the hill moved forward, slowly feeding.

"'Twas on a May morning, on the Ma'vern Hills," whispered the singer, "on the Ma'vern Hills"; and he fell in a dream.

The Great Hill of the Malverns stood over against the dreamer, a bare, up-climbing majesty, a vasty cone, making its goal in long green strides. Below, a wrinkle hinted a pass, and on the high flat saddle between the Great Hill and the Small, the grass was

trodden, albeit not worn away. A bell called softly from a valley hidden eastward; and up from the south-west, slantwise across a corner of the hill, a child came running into the dream, a gay lad in scarlet hosen and a green short coat, and shoes of fine leather. His eyes made a wonderment in his face, but his lips curled a smile at the wonder. A dark elf-lock danced on his forehead.

The dreamer moved no whit, but waited, level-eyed.

"What be these tricks?" cried the child in a voice betwixt a laugh and a gasp. "I saw thee from yonder hill, and thou wert distant a day's journey. Then the bell rang, and lo! I am here before the clapper's swung to rest."

He in the russet smiled, but answered nothing.

The little lad looked down and studied him. "I've missed my way," he said.

"What is thy way?"

"'Twas the way o' the hunt, but marry, now 'tis the way of a good dinner,—and that's a short road to the Priory. I am of Prince Lionel's train."

"Ay," returned the other, as who should say, "No need to tell me that"; and he added presently, "The hunt is below in the King's Forest; how art thou strayed? Thou'rt midway the top o' the Great Hill."

The child laughed, but, though his eyes were merry, yet were they shy, and the red mounted to his brow. He came a pace nearer.

"I made a little rondel to my lady; and it must be as my thought flew up, so clomb my feet likewise, and I was not aware."

He plaited his fingers in his belt and flushed a deeper red, half proud and half dismayed of his

confession. "I trust thee for a secret man, shepherd," he added.

The eyes of the dreamer laughed, but his lips were circumspect. He sat up and nursed his knee with his two long arms.

"Ay, of a truth, a secret man, young master; but no shepherd," he answered.

The little lad eyed him, and questioned with a child's simplicity, "What art thou, then?"

The youth looked onward to the Great Hill. "I know not, yet," he said

So for a little space he sat, forgetful of his questioner, until the child came close and sat beside him, laying one hand upon his arm and looking up to his face thoughtfully.

"Thou long brown man, it may be thou'rt a poet," he said at last.

"It may well be," the dreamer acquiesced, and never turned his eyes from the green hill.

"In London, at the court of the king, there be poets," the child continued; "but thou art of quite other fashion. Who is thy lady-love?"

"Saint Truth," the brown boy answered gravely.

"Saint—Truth!" repeated the child; "and is she dead, then?"

"Nay, I trow not; God forbid!"

"I marvel that thy lady chide thee not for thy mean apparel. In London is not a friar plays his wanton lute beneath a chamber window but he goeth better clad than thou."

"Hark you, young master, I follow not the friars!" the dreamer cried with a stern lip. "And for my lady, she careth for naught but that my coat be honestly

come by. So far as I may discover, she hath not her abode in the king's palace."

"Forsooth, a strange lady!" said the child; and then, leaning his head against that other's shoulder, "Poet, tell me a tale."

"I pipe not for lordings, little master," the youth returned, anger yet burning in his eyes.

"Nay, then, I'm no lord," laughed the child; "my father is a vintner in London. He hath got me in Prince Lionel's household by favour of the king; for that the king loveth his merchants of the city; and well he may, my father saith. There be others, lordings, among the children of the household; but I am none. I am a plain man like to thee, poet."

The dreamer shook his head with a mournful smile. "Not so close to the soil, master merchant, not so close to the soil. I smell o' the furrow."

"Nay, I'm no merchant, neither," the lad protested. "Hark in thine ear, thou long brown stranger, —and I'll call thee brother! My lady saith I'll be a poet. She's a most wise and lovely lady. Come, —tell me a tale!"

"I am no troubadour," sighed the brown youth; "I know one tale only, and that is over-long for a summer day."

But the child was angered; his eyes flashed, and he clenched one hand and flung it backward, menacing.

"I'll believe thou mockest me," he cried. "Lying tongue! No poet thou, but a lazy hind."

Then the grey, smouldering eyes of the dreamer shot fire, and a long brown arm jerked the lad to his knees.

"I tell no lies. My lady is Saint Truth," the

dreamer said. "Poet or no poet, as thou wilt, I'll not gainsay thee. But a truth-teller ever."

A little lamb that strayed near by looked up with startled face, and scampered down the hill, crying "Ba-a-a!" The huntsman's note came winding up from the green depths. The child arose and dusted his knees.

"There be poets that yet lie amazingly, — and boast thereof," he observed shrewdly; "but now I rede thy riddle of Saint Truth. 'Tis a sweet jest. I love thee for it, and by that I know thee for a poet. Tell me thy tale, and we'll be friends again. Of a surety thou art no hind; Prince Lionel's self is not more haughty of mien than thou. Sing then, poet,—smile!"

The dreamer cleared his brow but half unwillingly: "Who could not choose but smile on such a teasing lad?" he asked; and then, "My tale is but begun, and what the end shall be, or whether there be an end,—who shall say? Harken!

In a summer season when soft was the sun,  
I set me in a shepherd's coat as I a shepherd were;  
In the habit of a hermit, yet unholy of works,  
Wandered I wide in this world wonders to hear.  
But in a May morning on Malvern Hills  
There befell me a wonder, wonderful methought it;  
I was weary of wandering and went me to rest  
Under a broad bank by a burn side,  
And as I lay and leaned and looked on the waters,  
I slumbered in a sleep——

"No, no! not thus, not thus!" cried out the child on a sudden; "never thus! An thou come to court they'll not hearken thy long slow measures. Thou

shalt make thy verses the French way, with rhyme. Needs must thou learn this manner of the French ere thou come to court."

"I have no mind to come to court," the dreamer answered. "I have no mind to learn the manner of the French. There be a many souls in England that know not such light songs. It is for them I sing,—for the poor folk in cots. Think you that a poet may sing only for kings?"

"Nay, I trow he singeth neither for kings, nor for any manner wight, but for his own soul's health," quoth the child right solemnly; "and yet, 'twere well for him if he have the good-will of a king. My rhymes will not match an my belly be empty. But tell on thy tale. I like thine old fashion of singing."

And he listened the while the poet told of a high tower called Truth, and an evil place to the north, where the devil dwelleth,—and a great plain between. And here foregathered all kind of people that ever were in this world,—pardoners, and merchants, and knights, and friars, and cooks crying "Hot pies—hot!"—and fine ladies. And all these listened to Repentance that preached them a sermon.

The child laughed out aloud. "Thy men are puppets, O poet!" he cried. "Where is the breath of life in them? Didst never see a man, that thou canst make him so like to a wooden doll? The stone abbot down yonder, on his tomb in the Priory, is more alive than these. Hast seen the Miracle Play in Paul's Churchyard at Whitsuntide? There will be a crowd alive for thee. Hast never seen the 'prentices breaking each other his pate of a holiday in London streets? There be men! Thine are a string

o' names my lord bishop might be a-reading before the altar to shame their owners."

"Men be but little more than names for me, young master. I dwell among the hills. I know the sheep, the birds I know,—and Brother Owyn in the Priory; that learned me to sing."

Again the child laughed. "And wilt thou sing o' the bare hill-tops, and the sheep? Poets must sing of a fair launde where flowrets blossom,—of a green pleasaunce,—of my lady's garden. But here's a waste! What wilt find for a song? And under, in the King's Forest, 'tis a fearsome place at nightfall. Come thou to court, to London, brother. I'll show thee the king's gardens. I'll show thee men! I'll teach thee the French manner."

A lark ran up the sky a-carolling, and the child and the dreamer waited with their two heads thrown backward, watching. Then, when the bird was nested, the child leaped up and waved his little arms, his eyes shone, and "I'll sing like to that one," he cried; "I'll soar very high, and sing, and sing, the world beneath me one ear to hearken. Let us be larks, brother!"

But the dreamer shook his head. "I am the cuckoo. I sing but two notes, and them over and over," he answered mournfully.

The little lad caught up the fantasy and played with it betwixt his ripples of sweet laughter. "A brown bird, and it singeth hid,—two soft and lovely notes. Nay, come thou to London and turn nightingale."

"Alas!" said the dreamer, and again, "Alas!"

And the Priory bell rang soft in the valley, ten clear strokes.



"Dinner!" exclaimed the child, "and my lady's rondel lacking of three rhymes!"

"Yon's the pass," said the dreamer, "between the two hills. 'Tis a straight road."

"Ay, and a long one, is't? And the monks feed fast, and clean the platter."

"Nay, 'tis nearer than thou deem'st. Thy legs will carry thee to the gate ere the first dish is empty. The mist that is ever on Ma'vern Hills, even though the sun shine, maketh a near thing stand afar off. Haste thee! And hearken, to-night, an thou'lt have a merry tale of a Green Knight and Sir Gawaine of Arthur's Court, see thou beseech Brother Owyn. Himself hath been a knight one while."

The lad was twinkling down the pass, when he turned about, and "God keep thee, cuckoo!" quoth he.

"God keep thee, little lark!" said the dreamer.

## THE PARSONS' BATTLE

BEING A CHAPTER FROM "BUBBLE FORTUNE"

BY

GILBERT SHELDON

The thought uppermost in Mr. Wall's mind was that Sir Constantine had shown himself a very whimsical old gentleman, but the shade of resentment he felt at first was chased away by the reflection that the seeming oddity of the baronet's conduct was most probably due to his own inexperience and ignorance

of the manners of the gentry. But his present surroundings were a matter of more immediate and practical interest, and to these he now turned his attention. There was no moon and the night was dark, but stars shimmered faintly through a thin film of clouds.

Directly before him was an arched gateway, placed in a wall, which his great height enabled him to overlook. By touching the wall with his hands he learned that it was built of clay mixed with pebbles, and was crowned by a miniature roof of thatch. Within, as it seemed, was a garden, the extent of which it was impossible to determine, because of the darkness of the night. It was bounded on the opposite side by a long, low building, which might fairly be assumed to be a dwelling-house, since a narrow shaft, breaking the line of the roof, must almost certainly be a chimney. The house detached itself from the surrounding gloom by reason of its intense blackness, relieved, however, in one spot by a faint glow, as of firelight shining through a curtain.

Mr. Wall shouldered his valise and, pushing open the door, which hung unlatched, entered the garden. He found himself in a narrow paved path, much encroached upon by moss and weeds, and leading directly towards the house. As he drew near, he saw that the glow proceeded from a window to the right of the house-door. It had three lights divided by mullions, and a curtain was drawn across it. The door of the house, like that of the garden, was unlatched; but the sound of the parson's footsteps must have advertised someone within of his approach, for, before he could knock, a great voice was heard,

bidding him "Come in!" But the command was one not easy for a stranger to obey. The passage on which the door opened was pitch dark, and only a narrow chink of light on the level of the floor showed Wall where he was to look for the entrance of the room which he had been invited to enter. He passed his hands over the panels, but the cry of "Come in!" had been repeated more loudly and impatiently before they met the latch. Then he opened the door, took a step forward and stood still, blinking.

He was in a small low room, bare and ill-kept. A huge beam traversed the ceiling, and the walls were hung with guns, fishing-rods and hunting-crops, which formed their only ornaments. The window was on Wall's right, and between it and the door was a great open fireplace. A man sat before the fire. He wore a scarlet coat, a pair of riding-boots stood on the hearth beside him, and his stocking feet nearly touched the blazing logs. His face glowed red in the firelight and, when he turned it towards the door, Wall saw that the man was one-eyed. He neither spoke nor stirred, and his single eye held the gaze of the younger man. Incongruous as was his appearance here in this country parsonage, his air and attitude were those of a man perfectly at home. It was to be supposed that he must be an intimate friend of the vicar, and, if so, he ought surely to recognise in the newcomer a guest whose coming was expected. Yet he gave him no welcome, not even the bare greeting which he might very well have accorded to a total stranger. Albeit not very quick to judge of others, Wall was aware that he was in the presence of one not simply indifferent, but

actively hostile and malignant. At length by an effort he broke the silence.

"I am Gideon Wall," he said

"Oh!" said the other, and got up slowly from his chair.

Then the young parson saw confronting him a man nearly as tall as himself, and his match, or more, in bulk and in the breadth of his shoulders. His blue eye glared, and his face was distorted with passion, but his voice was quiet enough.

"Sir Constantine Divett brought you here?" he asked.

"Yes, truly," answered Wall, with growing astonishment; "but 'twas by the merest chance. Sir Constantine——"

"Sir Constantine ordained you, eh?" interrupted the other.

Wall stared at the man, finding that his words sounded crazy, whilst his manner seemed to imply that they were meant to be insulting.

"Oh, I can smell out the whole plot," continued the red-coated man. "First of all, Divett stole a suit of my old duds, and now he has found a fellow to wear them. I had not credited the old fox with so much cunning."

"Sir," said Wall, "I do not know what I have done to displease you. Is my uncle within?"

"Curse your uncle and have done with talking!" answered the other. "Are you ready?"

It appeared now to Wall's troubled mind that there were but two possible explanations of the man's strange conduct. Either he was mad or he had himself come to the wrong house.

"If I have been mistaken," he began, and took a step backward. But the red-coated man with a bound interposed himself between him and the door.

"No mistake at all!" he said. "What! Are you minded to cry off your bargain, now that you have seen Jasper Hinderwell?"

The man's fit of rage had given place to a kind of sinister and cruel merriment. The spring he had made had brought him so close to Wall that they almost touched each other, and the young man had instinctively faced about, and drawn apart, so that he was nearly in the middle of the room. Hinderwell laughed, and shot the heavy bolt which fastened the door.

"Pity the room is no larger," he said; "but 'twill serve. Pull yourself together, man. There is a bottle with rare stuff inside on the table beside you. Take a drink; maybe it will put heart into you."

"If I have intruded——" began Wall.

"Spare your apologies," cried Hinderwell. "You are most welcome. If you have an ounce of spirit in that great body of yours, you should give me the best sport I have had this many a day. But, hark'ee, man," he added, with a sudden gust of fury, "this will be no child's play. You come masquerading in your stolen broadcloth—stolen from me!—and you shall pay for it."

"Listen, sir," said Wall. "I do not understand a word you say. Suffer me to explain."

The other had thrown off his coat, and was rolling back his shirt-sleeves, exposing his hairy and muscular arms. The only answer he gave was a curt invitation to Wall to do likewise. The young man was sorely

troubled. There was but one door to the room, and before that Hinderwell mounted guard. His own temper was beginning to rise, exasperated by this unprovoked and persistent truculence, and he even permitted himself to indulge in the dangerous reflection that, if he were not by profession a man of peace, he would be sorely tempted to give the other the lesson in good manners of which he so plainly stood in need. But he immediately became sensible of the unbecoming nature of this train of thought, and assumed his gravest and most clerical air.

"Sir," he said, "recollect that I am a clergyman." Hinderwell stared at him and gave a great shout of laughter.

"On my soul," he cried, "I believe it is the truth! A real parson—so much the better! Pray now, how did old Divett scent you out, and whence do you come?"

The words and manner were not respectful to the cloth; yet he had condescended to ask questions and to demand explanations, and this, as it seemed to Wall, was something gained.

"I met Sir Constantine Divett this same afternoon for the first time at the Exeter Inn on the road between Ilminster and Honiton, but I come from Little Snarling in the diocese of Ely, where I have been curate these two years past. And now——"

"And now," repeated Hinderwell, "who knows?"

His fit of mirth had passed, and he stood for a moment, scowling; then with a roar like a wild beast hurled himself upon Wall. The onslaught sent the young man staggering back across the room, and nothing but the quickness of hand and eye which he

had learnt at Cambridge enabled him to break the full force of the blow. Yet, even so, he would have been hard pressed if the attack had been pushed home; but, in fact, after the first rush Hinderwell drew back.

"I gave you warning before," he cried, as though excusing himself, "but by ——!" and he swore a great oath—"I will not spare you a second time."

The width of the small room lay between the two men, for Hinderwell had retreated to the doorway, whilst the younger parson stood with his back against the wall opposite. It was clear to Wall that he would have to fight for his life. No law of God or man enjoined him, clergyman though he was, to suffer himself to be done to death by a madman. Nay, rather, it was his duty to hinder the other, if he could, from committing a great crime. But, as he measured his adversary with his eyes, these sage reasonings did but float like scum on the surface of his mind; and a glow of guilty, shamefaced happiness ran through his splendid limbs, exulting in the prospect of a fight which should give them worthy employment. Yet the parson in him made one more effort for peace.

"Stay!" he cried. "For the last time——" but he got no further, for Hinderwell was upon him, and the fight began.

It was a fight certain to have a speedy ending. In so narrow a space strategy counted for little; the issue hung on chance and brute strength. The men fought by the light of the fire, now burning low in the wide hearth. At one moment they saw each other as obscure shapes, and their blows were aimed almost at random. At another a spurt of flame showed every

detail of their forms and features coloured by a red glow. Their shadows danced madly on the walls and ceiling, confounded together for one instant in a monstrous unity, and drawing apart the next. Once Wall set his foot on a smouldering brand, and a rain of sparks shot forth and fell about the room.

In size and strength the men were nearly a match, in science Hinderwell excelled, but years of reckless living had left their mark upon him, and his eye and hand had lost their old sureness. At first Wall held himself on the defensive, then gradually the spirit of combat and the thirst for victory laid hold on him. With an adversary so dangerous and so implacable as Jasper Hinderwell, half-measures were of no avail. The elder man's savage fury was wearing him out. His blows had the force of a sledge-hammer, but they were more wildly aimed; he panted with rage and exhaustion, and the sweat poured down his face. Then at length Wall's opportunity came. With his left hand he parried a furious blow, and countering with his right, struck the other full on the throat. Down went Hinderwell, his head crashed against one of the fire-dogs, and he lay still.

The fight was over. Wall looked with dismay at the fallen man; then, stooping down, he joined his hands together behind his shoulders, and, so supporting him, drew him away from the fire. Hinderwell was senseless, and the blood oozed from a cut in the back of his head, where it had struck the andiron. The other put forth his hand to take the bottle, which by some miracle still stood on the table. It was half full of ardent spirits, and Wall, tilting it, poured some of the stuff down the wounded man's throat.



At once Hinderwell sat up and gazed blankly about him. Then the old look of bitter hate returned, and feebly waving aside Wall, who still hung over him, he struggled to his feet. Instinctively aware that Hinderwell found the wound to his pride less easy to bear than his bodily hurt, the other refrained from offering the help he would willingly have given. Neither man spoke a word. With fumbling hands Hinderwell detached a lantern from the wall and lighted it with a brand from the fire. Then he opened the door and went out. Wall heard his footsteps go padding down the passage, and out into the garden, and die away.

## ON LOOKING AT A FIELD OF WHEAT

BEING A CHAPTER FROM  
"A BOOK OF SIMPLE DELIGHTS"

BY  
WALTER RAYMOND

WE had a thunderstorm in the night.

There came a whirlwind and then a torrent of rain that set every tiny rill flowing and cut a deep water-course in the high-road before my door.

By morning the river was in flood. The water, of a deep chocolate colour borrowed of the peat, had risen so quickly that it both covered and hid boulders which had stood high and dry for weeks. The still pool for the time was like a mill-race; and where

the stream slackened, a small mountain of yellow foam clung on to the bank. The eye could see nothing of the bright gravel bed even at the ford. The village held an informal meeting on the bridge and decided unanimously that there was to be good fishing the day after to-morrow, "unless we do get some more."

We were glad of this, until old Hezekiah Hobbes cast a damper upon our delight by reminding us, "It must ha' beat down the corn terr'ble. I'll warrant it. Some places "

A calm had followed the tempest. But for a few white, fleecy clouds the sky was clear. The air was fresh and sweet; for every leaf and flower after a drought of a fortnight had drunk its fill, and all the moss, as well as every little fern between the rocks, was dripping wet.

Then I wondered how it had fared with my especial field of wheat. For everything on earth is mine, in so far as it ministers to my delight. All of us, when we cease to think of property, tacitly recognise the ownership conferred by love, and boldly say "my country" without the fee-simple in it of so much as a blade of grass. So that field of wheat was my field of wheat. For a field of wheat, mark you, is a field of wheat. None but a lunatic can deny this. And all the rest is paper.

Only the day before, I had stopped to feast my eyes on the wonder and the beauty of it.

A broad sea of standing wheat then lay before me, just beginning to tinge with the ruddy colour that makes it richer than gold. It stood tall and straight and almost free from weeds. There were only a few crimson poppies and a purple cockle or so close

to the gate where the crop was thin; and in expectation of the gale that brought up the great thunder-cloud, long billows swept from hedge to hedge, chasing each other with ceaseless monotony as they do upon the main.

But when I came again all this was changed.

In the still air my wheat-field was as tranquil as an inland lake. Not a ripple disturbed its surface. The ears bent over one towards the other under the burning heat as if asleep. Some of them, that held their heads an inch or two above their fellows, looked as if they were painted on the pale grey of the horizon. Even the taller wild oat sprinkled here and there throughout the crop, so slight and graceful that it shivered at the merest breath, was still. It had nothing more in the world to do but to stand in the sun, ripen and shed its seed. Even then the oat hung loosely in the open husk, ready to fall before harvest, and lie securely on the ground. There need be no anxiety. The future crop of wild oats will not fail.

On the top of a stout oak in the far corner of the field a solitary rook was perched. A sentinel who, undisturbed, would stand on guard for hours. His presence told a tale.

The storm of last night had done damage, though from here the wreckage was hidden by the standing corn. When the cloud burst, huge drops of rain, as big as bullets, fell on this solid square of wheat, in which each stalk was as upright and almost as tall as a grenadier. The stricken ears went tossing and swaying as if they were in pain. But the hollow reeds below withstood the strain; and here is the regiment on parade to-day as if it had never trembled at the

artillery above, or seen the lightning flash, or felt the brunt of the battle of wind and rain. Only in that far corner lie the fallen. There a heavier torrent fell, right in the stroke of the wind, and half an acre of wheat lay as flat as if it had been rolled.

"What? Out, the same as myself then, to take a look at my field o' wheat? 'Tis beat down shameful, sure, up there by the tree."

There was my landlord, jolly as usual, upon his pony again; and as he spoke he raised his arm and pointed with his stick.

The sentry rook, though he had taken no notice of me, uttered a warning caw. A hundred pairs of black wings glistened in the sunlight. Then followed as many blue. For a flight of pigeons was feeding there with the rooks.

"There! I'll bet a guinea they've a-been cramming their crops ever since daylight, an' so much as ever they've a-left it to fly to the pit for a drink. 'Tis the most gluttonous thing 'pon earth, a pigeon is, though the toads of sparrows be worse. Whatever the Almighty created 'em for I can't think."

He puckered his brow as if making another attempt. Then he shook his head, as if to give the riddle up. A real John Bull, one of the old-fashioned sort, is this owner of the field of wheat, who, while upon principle devoutly grateful to Providence, regards some minor works, including wood-pigeons and small birds, with genial criticism. Yet with all his grumbling he is at heart contented, and looks at disaster with a sort of well-fed optimism.

"To be sure," he thoughtfully added, scratching his head to promote a deeper reflection. "There,

He wur bound to put in some few drawbacks like, I do suppose, or a man couldn't never expect to go to a better place."

Contented with this explanation, he gazed with pride across the level acres of yellowing corn, picked an ear or two, rubbed out the grain between his hands, and winnowed it with his breath. Then he pinched a berry until a drop of moisture as white as milk flowed out upon his finger and thumb.

"Shan't reap for another week or more," he said, with sudden decision.

Suddenly the face of my landlord became glorified with a great idea. His smile was even more genial than when he let me the cottage.

"Look here!" cried he, "I'll tell 'ee what. You've a-got nothing on this earth to do but enjoy yourself."

"I have held that contention often—for the whole human race," said I.

"Ay, but some be born sour and can't help it. An' some sad, not o' their own faults, though that's neither here nor there. You go up in that corner, cut a few hazel boughs an' make yourself a bit of a bushment. I'll ride home and get a gun an' a pocketful o' cartridges. I'll bring on a crust o' bread an' cheese, too, an' a bottle o' cider. You sit in all day there out o' sight, an' I wouldn't say—I wouldn't say you won't kill a score. I wouldn't swear—I wouldn't swear you don't kill fifty. My name is John Creed."

He was so positive, so full of enthusiasm, that he carried me with him. He seemed pleased. To urge me to haste he said he should not be gone more than five minutes.

I pushed my way along the hedgerow on the narrow strip of rough herbage between the ditch and the standing corn. Here the crop was thin where rabbits fed in the spring. Honeysuckles climbed and wild roses sprawled all over the hedge, mingling with the white, bell-shaped flowers of the woodbine and the broad, shining leaves of the black bryony, that becomes paler and smaller the further the plant pushes its way.

There came a sweet-briar scent from the hedge roses, this hot noonday of late summer, after the rain, though there was little song from the birds. They had hatched their last broods. The countryside was full of their progeny, and for the most part they had ceased to sing. Yet still you might sometimes hear the skylark, that built its nest in April between the drills, when this same field of wheat was green. And the robin, who keeps a merry heart all the year through. And though they were mute that day, the sparrows—that chatter so loudly around the village eaves—in company with various of their cousins, the finches, flew across the path from the corn to the shelter of the hedgerow in such increasing swarms that the music of their wings was like the continual humming of a mill-wheel. They had made the corn scanty close to the hedge. The ground below was thickly bestrewn with the chaff they had thrown down in getting at the grain. In front of me I could see them fluttering close to the ear, for the slender stem bends down under their weight. Behind, in twos or threes they went flying back from the hedgerow almost as soon as the intruder had passed by.

Near to the oak the ditch was dry, and here I

contrived what my landlord so quaintly called a "bushment" by pulling down the leafy boughs to form a bower. He came before the work was completed and lent a hand. He was full of zeal, and brought a dry sack for me to sit upon.

"There," cried I, with the legitimate pride of an architect in a masterpiece, "is a summer-house fit for a king!"

"So 'tis," said he, with an air of conviction. "Or a hedgehog."

My bower had a garden in front, and beyond that lay the untrodden forest of wheat. The field convolvulus had twined round the nearest corn-stalks, as if to throttle them, its delicately veined flowers wide open to the light; and the tiny pimpernel, the "shepherd's weather-glass," looked up from the ground, its little red petals turned back until they were flat, because the day was bright. There were smaller scarlet poppies on their hairy stems, yellow marigolds and blue cornflowers with stalks so slender yet so tough that reapers long ago gave them the name of "blunt-sickles." There were purple cockles, as by the gate, tall and erect, as if in scorn of the pale little heartsease at their feet. And the air was filled with the scent of wild mint that had been trodden under our feet and crushed when we were making the bushment.

I stayed as quiet as a mouse, but the pigeons did not return.

All the other living things of the cornfield moved quite close to me without suspicion of my presence. Sometimes there came a rustle amongst the standing corn and the ears shook, although there was no wind.

That was a hare travelling along her run, a beaten track amongst the straight stems of the upright corn, smooth as a well-used path through a forest of pines. A rabbit crossed from the wheat to the hedgerow, and presently a stoat on the same track.

Towards afternoon there came a low cluck from the other side of the hedge. Presently, close to the oak-tree, a covey of partridges came through a gap that had been stopped with a hurdle. They stayed awhile and dusted themselves on the dry bank under the shady branches. They were close enough to be counted, and all the little, unconscious workings of their minds could be observed.

To watch them was a real delight.

It set me upon the epic of a covey of thirteen.



NOTES ON BOOKS  
WORTH READING

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